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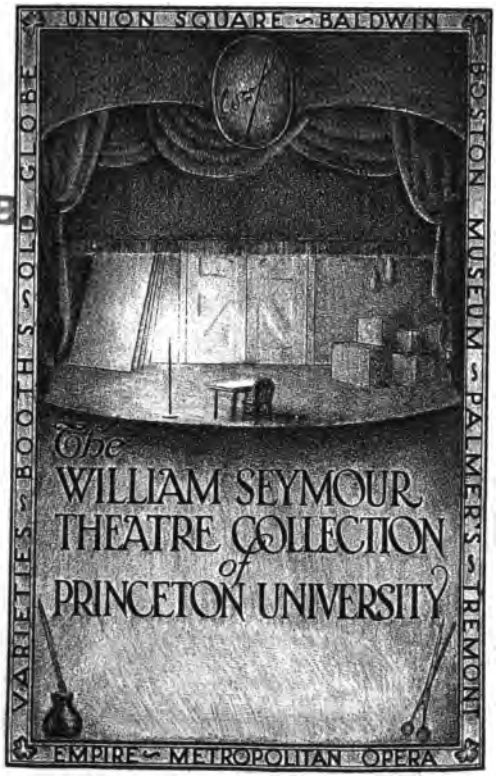
THE HOUSE OF THE HEART & OTHER PLAYS FOR CHILDREN

BY

CONSTANCE D'ARCY MACKAY



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THE HOUSE OF THE HEART AND OTHER PLAYS FOR CHILDREN

Designed for use in the schools

BY

CONSTANCE D'ARCY MACKAY



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HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY
1909



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Published, November, 1909

TO MY MOTHER

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Speaking of the dramatic instinct President Eliot of Harvard has lately said:

Here is this tremendous power over children . . . that ought to be utilized for their good. It is true that the dramatic instinct is very general. . . . So I say that this power . . . is one that ought to be at least in every school in this country, and moreover I believe that it is going to be.

PREFACE

THE one-act plays contained in this volume are designed in the hope of filling the needs of public school performances, ethically, dramatically, and educationally. In consequence each play contains a distinct lesson, whether of courage, gentle manners, or contentment. The settings are simple, and the costumes such as are within the compass of the schoolroom. Full directions for costumes, scene setting, and dramatic action are given with each play. Several of the plays are especially adapted to holiday seasons such as Christmas, Thanksgiving, etc., and all of them have stood the test of actual production—that of "The House of the Heart" was given by the New York Educational Theatre for Children and Young People; those written for the out-of-doors have had production in various parks and playgrounds; and the rest have been acted in the public schools and social settlements of New York and other cities.

Thanks are due to the *St. Nicholas, The Woman's Home Companion, The Delineator, The Housekeeper, The Churchman, The Normal Instructor,* and *Primary Plans* for their kind permission to reprint these plays.

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SYNOPSIS

THE HOUSE OF THE HEART. Morality Play. Suitable for any season.

THE GOOSEHERD AND THE GOBLIN. Comedy suitable for June exercises.

THE ENCHANTED GARDEN. Flower Play. Suitable for June exercises.

NIMBLE-WIT AND FINGERKIN. Industrial Play. Suitable for any season.

A LITTLE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS. Morality Play. Suitable for Thanksgiving.

A PAGEANT OF HOURS. To be given Out of Doors. Suitable for Summer.

ON CHRISTMAS EVE. Suitable for Christmas time.

THE ELF CHILD. Suitable for any season.

THE PRINCESS AND THE PIXIES. Suitable for any season.

THE CHRISTMAS GUEST. Miracle Play. Suitable for Christmas.

THE HOUSE OF THE HEART

A Morality Play

CHARACTERS

CHILD

WISDOM

LOVE

CHEERFULNESS

INDUSTRY

EXPERIENCE

LADY GOSSIP

LAZINESS

VANITY

GRUMBLE

DAME QUARRELSOME

ENVY

DRAMATIC DIRECTIONS

THE scene is in the House of the Heart, and while ampler directions for its setting follow, the schoolroom setting of it may be arranged very simply indeed.

There should be three entrances, one at left, one at right, and one in the background. These can easily be arranged with screens draped with cheesecloth—a draped interior and background being the way of setting the old Morality Plays, as all teachers familiar with "Everyman" will remember. The draping in this case should be of scarlet—the color of a heart. If scarlet cannot be had, white may be used instead. In this case a large red heart should be fastened in the draped background as a sign that it *is* the House of the Heart. If the window called for in the directions is not feasible, the entrance in background can be used instead. Have Cheerfulness spring through it instead of through the window. The furniture consists of a bench, a table, and several chairs. Also a pile formed of cushions, preferably crimson.

For the schoolroom costumes, worn over the every-day clothes of those taking part, each child should be provided with two yards and a half of either cheese-cloth or cambric. For the girls' costumes, cut out a square in the center of the cheesecloth and slip it over

their heads. The long, straight pieces that will thus hang back and front will be exactly the lines of costume worn in the seventeenth century. The neck can be ornamented with lace or gold embroidery. For the boys, if hose and doublet cannot be had, cheesecloth cut in the same fashion, only much shorter, coming above the knee so as to form a kind of tunic. These tunics should be belted in at the waist with loose girdles of leather or cord.

The Child wears pale blue cheesecloth; Experience a shepherd costume—tunic of gray cambric, skins draped across the shoulders, a leather girdle, and shepherd's staff in hand. Vanity, prettily flowered cotton crêpe, with blue girdle and a handsome mantle. Love, white cambric with a border of silver paper cut out and applied. Lady Gossip, dark green cambric. Dame Quarrelsome, slate-colored cambric, with a mantle much torn and rent. Envy, vivid green cambric. Cheerfulness, red cambric; strings of gilt bells. Industry, deep bright blue cambric.

In connection with the play, the children taking part in it should read or have read to them portions of "Pilgrim's Progress" and "Everyman."

THE PROLOGUE

Spoken by Experience

GENTLES, I bid you all give ear
Unto the play that follows here.
Within a Heart the scene is laid,
Both good and evil will be played.
Grumble and Gossip you shall see,
And likewise Love and Industry.
Wisdom appears upon the stage
With gentle counsels, true and sage,
While Vanity her time doth pass
By gazing on her looking glass—
Bedecked with gauds and jewels rare,
The gems she purchased at the Fair.
Dame Quarrelsome you shall behold,
And hear her loudly rage and scold;
Laziness, too, who yawns away
The hours of every precious day,
Avoiding Difficulty's Hill,
Taking Sloth's wages for his till.
While Cheerfulness with bells so sweet
Runs to and fro on nimble feet.
And, lastly, in a robe of green
Jealous-eyed Envy will be seen.

The Child who owns this Heart doth learn
Which ones to love and which to spurn.
Full hard was this for her to do
As we will straightway show to you.
I am Experience. I dwell
In mountains called Delectable,
And come from those far heights to pray
A gracious hearing for our play.
So to the scene that doth commence
Beseech you give kind audience!

THE HOUSE OF THE HEART

SCENE: *The House of the Heart.*

TIME: *The latter half of the seventeenth century.*

(1678-79)

A heart-shaped room. The footlights, if possible, set in a curve to add to its semblance. Scene lit by red light which softens and gradually fades after the rise of the curtain. The walls are cream-color. The furniture, notably a table and several chairs, is of the style of the seventeenth century. (Heavy massive furniture in "Mission" style will do.) There is a carved bench against the wall in left background, and a pile of dark red velvet cushions in the right foreground. An arras by the right wall. Door in background, center, flanked by a window on either side.

At the rise of the curtain, Wisdom is seated, and appears to be listening, as if waiting for some one. The Child, without, knocks, and as Wisdom is slow to answer, knocks again, and then opens the door.

WISDOM

(kindly).

Enter, my child.

CHILD

(wonderingly).

Knew you that I would come?

WISDOM

(smiling).

Aye, for this house was meant to be your home.

CHILD.

(surprised).

My home?

WISDOM.

Yea, yours. Henceforward from to-day
You shall reign over it with endless sway!

CHILD

(interested).

Nay, but what house is this, I pray you tell?

WISDOM.

House of the Heart 'tis called. Oh, rule it well,
For on your ruling hangs your weal or woe.

CHILD

(drawing near to Wisdom).

Your name, sweet counselor, I fain would know.

WISDOM.

Wisdom, my child.

CHILD

(eagerly).

And have we met before?

WISDOM.

Nay, for you were too young to grasp my lore.
I waited till the hour when you should turn
Unto your Heart, its inmost ways to learn;
When you should look and question what was there,
And come to take possession, full and fair.
Therefore I bode, knowing that soon or late
That hour must strike, for little folk or great!
And now—'tis here!

CHILD.

Then pray you, of your grace,
Read me the meaning of this strange, new place,
Where of a sudden I have found my way.

WISDOM.

See that you guard it wisely, day by day.
Greater than he who storms a city's wall
Is he who holdeth his own heart in thrall,
Ruling its guests, watching its portals well—
For the Heart, Child, is like a citadel
Beleagured oft by foes, within, without,
That your own watchfulness must put to rout.
Will you remember?

CHILD.

Aye.

WISDOM.

To make or mar
This Heart is yours. Its guardian you are.
Look to it well!

CHILD.

Beseech you, of your wit,
Tell me how best to govern over it!

WISDOM

(indicating).

See the door rusts not on its hinges. See
That on your hearthstone burns continually
The sacred fire of hospitality;
For there is naught so cold as a cold heart.

[*Wisdom turns towards the door, as if to leave. The Child follows with outstretched hands.*

CHILD.

Oh, tarry here a space! Why should we part?

WISDOM.

So you shall learn to rule your Heart alone!

CHILD

(wistfully).

Alack! What shall I do if you be gone?
I shall be desolate!

WISDOM.

Nay, Industry
And Love and Cheer shall keep you company!

CHILD.

At that I do rejoice!

WISDOM.

You shall decide
Which guests shall leave your Heart, and which abide.
Beware, oh Child, what guests you entertain,
For those who enter here bring joy or pain.
If any knock who have no right to stay,
Keep the door shut, and send them on their way.
Let no one in who is not kind and true.

CHILD

(gravely).

I will remember.

WISDOM

(going).

Now farewell to you,
And to this Heart which I leave to your keeping.

[*Exit Wisdom through door in background. The Child stands watching, as if looking far up the road. Love and Cheerfulness and Industry enter from behind the arras at*

right. As the Child comes down center they make a deep obeisance and say together.

Sweet Child, good morrow, and a kindly greeting!

CHILD

(delightedly).

Now by your bells you Cheerfulness must be!

CHEERFULNESS.

Ready to help you at your need, parde!

CHILD

(to Love).

And you are none but Love!

LOVE.

And I will give
True joyance to your Heart while here I live!

CHILD

(to Industry).

And you are Industry!

INDUSTRY.

'Tis my delight
To serve you faithfully, by day or night.

CHEERFULNESS.

While round your neck I pray you let there shine
Contentment's jewel.

[*Fastens it on chain about her neck.*

CHILD.

Grammercy, friend mine!

CHEERFULNESS.

A frown will dim its luster, or a tear,
But smile and laugh and it will aye be clear.
It will reflect the radiance of your face
As in the dew the sun's bright gleam we trace.

CHILD

(earnestly).

Long will I treasure it, and guard it well.
Right glad am I you are with me to dwell!

LOVE

(smiling).

No heart so base but I am sometime there!

INDUSTRY.

True fealty unto this your house I swear!

CHEERFULNESS.

Leal, too, am I. Have you not heard folk say
"A merry heart goes far into the day!"

CHILD.

Hark! Some one knocks!

LADY GOSSIP

(without).

I pray you, let me in!

LOVE

(gravely).

Will you let all so quick an entrance win?

CHILD

(pauses, then returns, pleadingly).

Sure, 'tis some guest I have not seen before!

LOVE

(warningly).

Remember Wisdom's counsel! Guard the door!

[*The knocking continues.*

CHILD

(drawing near door again).

Who is it waits?

LADY GOSSIP

(without).

I, Gossip, bringing news.

CHILD

(who has looked out window, and then gone eagerly to unlatch door).

'Tis Lady Gossip! How can I refuse!
For she is very sweet, and very fair.

LOVE.

Is Gossip *sweet?* I warn you, Child, beware!

[*The Child opens the door. Lady Gossip enters, gives a keen glance at those present, and seeing Love and Cheerfulness, tosses her head and moves down center without any exchange of greeting. Love, meantime, goes toward the door. The Child, seeing that Love is about to depart, leaves Lady Gossip, and catches at Love's sleeve with a detaining hand.*

CHILD.

Oh, Love, you will not leave me?

LOVE.

Even so.

If Lady Gossip tarries here, I go;
For I may not keep fellowship with guile.

CHILD

(irresolute).

Nay, but how soft her speech, how bright her smile!
In sooth, her chatter casts a pleasing spell!

LADY GOSSIP

(catching at Child's hand).

Yea, let me stay!

[*The Child hesitates, and finally goes over to Lady Gossip.*

LOVE.

I' faith then, fare-thee-well!

[*Exit Love. Cheerfulness also starts for the door.*

CHILD.

What! Cheerfulness, will you forsake me, too?

CHEERFULNESS.

If Gossip bides, we may not stay with you.
Though we will leave your heart, we will be near.
Call on our names and we will straightway hear.

[*Exit Cheerfulness. Industry starts to follow.*

INDUSTRY.

Now after them I too will likewise hie!

[*Exit Industry.*

CHILD.

Alack! Bereft of service now am I!

LADY GOSSIP

(reassuringly).

Others will come!

LAZINESS

(popping his head in the door).

Do you a servant need?

CHILD

(turning).

Now, peradventure, here is help indeed!
Your name is——

LAZINESS

(entering with a swagger).

Laziness! Sworn comrade I
To such as from all useful labor fly.
For Industry's as common as the wind;
But such a one as I you'll seldom find.

LADY GOSSIP

(nodding)

There he speaks truth!

CHILD

(to Laziness).

And have you served before?

LAZINESS.

Yea, Dame Deceit I served a year or more.
'Twas she who taught me many a pleasing grace.
With Mistress Folly, too, I bode a space,

In putting off a task from day to day
There's none can match me. Prithee bid me stay!

CHILD

(undecided).

Your raiment, Laziness, is torn and rent.

LAZINESS.

'Faith, that may be, since through the mire I went!
For as I journeyed, straight across my way
The darkling Hill of Difficulty lay.
To climb its rugged summit I was loth—
I chose an easier path—the Mire of Sloth.

(cajolingly)

'Twas but avoiding Difficulty's Hill
That made my tattered doublet look so ill!

[*Before the Child can decide, Lady Gossip, who has strolled to the window, announces another guest. Laziness, taking advantage of this, stays, throws himself on the cushions, right foreground, and dozes.*

LADY GOSSIP.

Another guest draws nigh! 'Tis Vanity,
Clothed like the rainbow, and as fair to see.

[*Vanity enters.*

CHILD

(delighted).

Sweet Vanity, will you not linger here?

VANITY

(advancing).

Aye, that will I right gladly. Be of cheer!
Good morrow, Lady Gossip!

LADY GOSSIP

(with a curtsey).

Greetings, friend!

VANITY.

(sweeping her robes about).

How like you all these colors—do they blend?
What think you of my eyes, my lips, my hair?
My mirror tells me I am wondrous fair!

[*Gazes into mirror which she wears on a chain attached to her girdle.*

What news, dear Gossip?

LADY GOSSIP.

All the world's awry!

(knowingly)

Oh, I could tell you tales did I but try—
Of Envy, Grumble, Quarrelsome, and those
Whom we both know—

(whispers to Vanity)

Such news I could disclose!
Have you no rumor keen—my ears to fill?
No secret I can turn to others' ill?

VANITY.

Nay, none! Of learning news I make no boast.
It is my mirror that enchants me most!

[*Holds out her many neck-chains with their brilliant pendants, looking at them lovingly, one by one, while Lady Gossip and the Child stand by, admiringly.*

These gauds and trinkets that I greatly prize
Were much esteemed by Master Worldly Wise;
While that old wrinkled beldame, Mistress Greed,
Would fain have bought from me each chain and bead.

CHILD

(her interest more and more aroused).

Where did you hap to meet with such as she?

VANITY

(pacing slowly to and fro, glancing now at her robes, now at her mirror).

Why, at the Fair—the Fair of Vanity.
'Tis a brave place, with all that doth most please—
Where you can purchase baubles such as these,
And plumes and jewels and the bright attire
That Money-Love and Feeble-Mind admire!

[*Vanity goes towards the background, continuing to gaze at her own splendid raiment. Lady Gossip and the Child remain in foreground, watching her.*

CHILD.

How soft her robes sweep round her, fold on fold,
And see her necklace——

LADY GOSSIP.

(nodding).

Of the purest gold!

CHILD

(with a trace of envy in her tone).

Her jeweled bracelets——

LADY GOSSIP.

How they gleam and shine!

CHILD

(coveting).

I would that I might own one half as fine—
For she has all there is, and I have nought:
My robe is not so curiously wrought,
I have no kirtle of embroidery blue,
Nor mantle made of such a splendid hue—

LADY GOSSIP

(deliberately adding to the ferment).

Even your jewel that was once so bright
Begins to fade, and lose its lustrous light.

[*A step in the doorway without. Vanity turns.*

VANITY.

Who comes?

LADY GOSSIP.

'Tis Grumble entering the door.

GRUMBLE

(entering, bent and crabbed).

I have trudged such a way my back is sore,
And every bone in it seems like to break!

CHILD

(calling as she assists Grumble).

A footstool, Laziness! Awake! Awake!

[*Laziness continues to doze, in spite of her efforts to rouse him. Business of getting up, rubbing his eyes, and dropping to sleep again. The Child finally fetches the footstool herself. Gossip and Vanity are discussing each other's clothes in dumb-show. The Child has meantime assisted Grumble to a chair.*

GRUMBLE.

Nay, this chair likes me not. 'Tis hard and plain.

[*He goes to another chair on the right.*

This one's too soft!

CHILD.

I prithee, try again!

GRUMBLE.

(going to another chair).

Slough of Despond, whereby I rest and live,
Has far more comfort than *your* house can give!

VANITY.

Nay, 'tis a mirey spot, full dark and drear!

GRUMBLE

(peevishly).

Peace, Vanity! Your voice offends my ear!

[*He goes back to the chair he first occupied, and after a moment trembles violently.*

I shiver here. With draughts this house is cursed!

[*He goes to another seat.*

My throat is parched. I am consumed with thirst!

CHILD.

A flagon, Laziness! Bestir your heels!

[*Laziness does not move, and it is the Child a second time who attends to Grumble's wants, bringing him a flagon and a cup. As she kneels by him, pouring it out, he unclasps the Jewel of Contentment from her neck.*

GRUMBLE.

The choicest jewel falls to him who steals.

[*He chuckles evily, and after holding it up a moment slips it into a leather pouch that he wears at his girdle. The Child, all unconscious of what has passed, gives him the cup. He drinks.*

CHILD.

Satisfied, sir?

GRUMBLE

(shaking his head).

Nay!

(leers up at her)

But *you* are, I trow?

CHILD

(looking straight before her).

An hour ago I was full blithe, but now
I know not how it is—I fain would cry!
Good my friend Grumble, can you tell me why?

GRUMBLE

(giving back the cup).

I tell you? Nay! I cannot tell you. Lo,
How should I wot the cause of all your woe?

DAME QUARRELSOME

(shrilly, without).

What ho, within!

[*Pounds on door.*

CHILD

(greatly distressed).

Have others hither come?

LADY GOSSIP

(looking out the window).

Now, by my faith, it is Dame Quarrelsome!

LAZINESS

(awakening, with a show of interest).

Dame Quarrelsome!

LADY GOSSIP.

Yea, you shall hear full soon
Her shrill-voiced clamor, morning, night, and noon!

DAME QUARRELSOME

(entering, shaking her fist).

Have done, you Gossip! I'll not hear a word!
I thought 'twas your malicious tongue I heard!
You wry-faced harpy——

[*They quarrel in dumb show at the left. Laziness, who has crossed to them, stands, hands on knees, regarding them delightedly, turn-*

ing first to one and then to the other, Grumble crosses to a chair at right.

LADY GOSSIP

(looking out the window).

And I do perceive
My dear friend Envy!

ENVY

(entering door boldly).

Well met, by your leave!
[*To Child.*
Coveting County is my *rightful* home!

VANITY

(sneering).

Pity it is that you were fain to roam!
[*Vanity goes toward background.*

ENVY

(looking after Vanity vengefully).

Nay, now I ask, what right has she to wear
A smock so splendid and a kirtle rare?
Faith would I rend them if my hands could reach——

DAME QUARRELSOME

(at other side of room, striking Laziness).

Mayhap a buffet on the ear shall teach
You manners, Master Laziness, anon!

CHILD

(center, suddenly discovering the loss of her jewel).

Alack! My jewel of Contentment's gone!
'Tis stolen!

ENVY.

Now this passes all belief!

DAME QUARRELSOME

(angrily breaking from her group).

Which of us all will you dare name as thief?

GRUMBLE

(edging near to Dame Quarrelsome).

Aye, which?

[*A moment's silence during which all the vices stand in defiant attitudes.*

CHILD

(turning from them with gesture of despair).

I know not! I am sore beset!
Alas! Alas! How soon I did forget
Wisdom's true counseling to guard the door!
Would I had harkened me to Wisdom's lore!
Mayhap I am too late——

(with clasped hands).

Oh, Industry,
And Love and Cheer, I pray you come to me,

And dwell with me, and never more depart,
And be the guests of this, my troubled Heart!

CHEERFULNESS

(without).

Call but upon our names, and we will hear!

LADY GOSSIP

(disturbed).

Whose voice is that?

GRUMBLE

(trembling).

Whose bells ring soft and clear?

CHEERFULNESS

(springing in window at right).

Out, Lady Gossip! Grumble, out I say!

LADY GOSSIP

(hurrying out).

In sooth, I will leave quickly!

[*Grumble starts to follow.*

CHEERFULNESS

(facing him).

Grumble, stay!

[*Grumble cowers.*

Return what you have stolen!

[*Grumble gives up jewel.*

Now begone!

[*Exit Grumble.*

ENVY

(frightened).

And as for me, I, too, will hasten on!

LAZINESS.

Industry comes! Before he with me deals
I will at once betake me to my heels!

[*Laziness goes out the door, and Love and Industry enter it.*

DAME QUARRELSOME

(in a panic, to Vanity).

Fetch me my mantle, for full well I know
That now that Love has entered, I must go!

[*Exit Dame Quarrelsome.*

VANITY

(approaching Child beguilingly).

Nay, let me tarry here, I do entreat,
You know full well I am both fair and sweet!

LOVE.

Yea, with a deadly sweetness.

VANITY

(to Child, with a beseeching gesture).

Of your grace
I pray that I may linger here a space.

LOVE

(to the Child).

Choose you between us.

CHILD

(with a gesture of dismissal).

Vanity, depart!

VANITY

(with an angry toss of the head).

Good riddance, then, to you, and to your Heart!

[*Exit Vanity.*

CHILD.

Sweet guests, that spite of former word and deed
Still came to help me in my utmost need,
Oh, I have wisely learned to guard the door
So no dread foes may ever enter more!
That in my Heart eternally may be
Love, Wisdom, Cheerfulness, and Industry!

CURTAIN

EPILOGUE

Spoken by Experience

GENTLES, ye see the play is done,
The lights are out, the actors gone;
But in each child there is a Heart
Where good and evil play their part.
Ye have learned our lessoning
What rancor Quarrelsome doth bring.
Grumble and Gossip you shall spurn,
From Laziness and Envy turn.
But Love and Cheerfulness invite
To be your guests and bring delight.
Thus shall your Heart well guarded be!
Here endeth our Morality.

COSTUMES

DRESSES for the girls should be gathered from a Dutch neck, and fall in soft straight folds to the floor, belted in by a silken cord or chain girdle. Angel sleeves. Quaint caps bordered with lace or gold. Headgear shaped like a coronet may also be worn. See any good book of seventeenth century costumes.

For the boys, trim-fitting doublets and hose to the knee. Angel sleeves or puffed sleeves. Girdles of silken cords or chains.

INDIVIDUAL COSTUMES

CHILD: Dress of pale blue, with silver girdle.

EXPERIENCE: Tunic of pale gray cambric. Leather girdle and pouch. Skins fastened across shoulders. Leather sandals, fastened with leather strappings.

WISDOM: Purple robe, edged with ermine at sleeves and neck. Dull gold girdle.

LOVE: White silken robe. Wreath of roses on hair. Golden girdle.

LADY GOSSIP: Very dark green dress. Angel sleeves lined with pale pink. Peaked cap of pink and green.

VANITY: Handsome dress of rich brocade in colors of

dull blue and saffron. Rich blue mantle trimmed with gold. Golden head-dress from which floats a veil of cloudy white. Where her angel sleeves fall back from the arm are seen many bracelets. Her fingers sparkle with rings. There are a number of chains about her neck. She also wears a blue girdle, to which a hand mirror is attached by a long chain of ribbon.

DAME QUARRELSOME: Slate-colored dress. Angel sleeves lined in orange. Black cloak in rents and tatters. Black velvet cap edged with lace, and set on her head much awry.

ENVY: Vivid green dress, the neck and sleeves of which are edged with gold embroidery.

CHEERFULNESS: Crimson suit, hose, and cap, with a crimson quill stuck jauntily in the side. Gold cord at waist. Bells with a sweet, clear tone, are concealed under his doublet. They ring as he moves.

INDUSTRY: Hose and doublet of deep bright blue. Angel sleeves lined in old rose. Old rose cord at girdle.

GRUMBLE: Black suit and cap. The latter goes down at each side like ear muffs. His body is bent and young; but his face is old and made up with wrinkles. His mouth sags complainingly.

LAZINESS: Brown suit, much out at elbows. Brown cap with bedraggled black quill. Brown cord at waist.

Each of the *dramatis personæ* should act in char-

acter. Vanity should be always looking in her mirror, or toying with her dress and headgear. Cheerfulness should continually skip about, blithely and lightly. Industry carries a mop broom, and should be continually busy. Wisdom should be stately. Laziness ever yawning and lounging, etc., etc.

THE GOOSEHERD AND THE GOBLIN

A Play in One Act

CAST

CONRAD, the Gooseherd
DAME ALICE, Conrad's mother
PETERKIN, a goblin
DAWN-DELIGHT, SILVERDEW, RAINBOW-WING } Fairies
TRIP, a goblin, NIP, a goblin } Attendant on Peterkin

DRAMATIC DIRECTIONS

THE play is one for early Spring or Fall. It is designed to bring into the schoolroom a breath of the great out-doors. The scene is supposed to take place in the Black Forest. Let green tree branches be drawn on the blackboard to represent tossing boughs. Or, if the season be either Fall or Spring, have green branches fastened up, and a few leaves scattered on the floor. Even leaves of green paper wired to bare branches have their value, and take from the deadly atmosphere of the commonplace which clogs so many schoolroom productions. A three-legged stool, covered with a round of white cardboard about a foot and a half across makes the pinky-brown toadstool. The pink and brown edges are painted on the white cambric that covers the cardboard toadstool-wise. See that it is all firmly fastened together and in no danger of slipping.

The everyday clothes of the children will only need a few touches to convert them into peasant costumes. Conrad should wear a soft dark cap with a long goose feather. Dame Alice, short white apron to which is fastened a colored border and pocket. She also wears a white cap of either tissue paper or muslin. Dawn-Delight, a white summer dress if possible.

Pink paper crown and wand. Silverdew, white or light-colored dress, silver crown and wand. Rainbow-Wing, rainbow-colored wand and crown. All three fairies wear cardboard wings fastened to their shoulders. Those of Dawn-Delight are pale pink; those of Silverdew are white with silver dashes; those of Rainbow-Wing suit her name. Peterkin, Nip, and Trip wear peaked caps of gray tissue paper.

Conrad's "King's Robe" is, of course, some older person's cloak or cape, to which is basted ermine trimming made of white cotton batting with black tails. When he is the miser, he wears this same cloak turned inside out.

The play is also suited for out-doors, and directions for such a production follow. The teacher should read the children these directions, as doing so will help them visualize what they are trying to portray.

For the schoolroom production the following prologue should be spoken by one of the children not taking part in the play.

PROLOGUE

FRIENDS, we present a simple scene
Enacted in a forest green.
And though you see no forest here,
And though no birds sing sweet and clear,
Let but your fancy hold its sway,
And we will take you far away
From house and town and busy mart
Deep, deep into a forest's heart.
Think you that at my feet is seen
A tapestry of grasses green,
And that on either hand there grow
Tall trees, their branches bending low;
That backward stretches the great wood—
A lovely, fragrant solitude
Where nimble elves and fairies dance,
Hid far from any mortal glance.
Think that on this side you behold
The hut that shelters from the cold
Dame Alice and her only child,
Who live within this woodland wild.
Think that you catch the smell of flowers,
Of grass new-drenched with silver showers,
And that you hear the soft winds stir
Through oak and pine and pointed fir,

And that o'er all, serene and high,
Stretches the blue arch of the sky.
Think but of this and you shall see
A little Gooseherd's Comedy.

THE GOOSEHERD AND THE GOBLIN

The play is designed to be given out of doors, though an indoor production is perfectly possible. The following directions are, however, for its outdoor production.

The scene is a bit of woodland sward, with grass, trees, bushes in abundance.

At the right a tiny hut built of branches. Behind it stretches the wood. By it a pile of branches and fagots that have the appearance of being lately gathered.

At the left another edge of the wood. A wooded distance in the background.

The center of the stage is a clear, grassy place, free from either weeds or bushes. The play begins by Conrad's mother, an oldish peasant woman, coming out of the woods, left, with a bundle of fagots on her back, and Conrad following her and taking the fagots from her.

CONRAD.

Let me carry the fagots, mother. I am stronger than you.

DAME ALICE

(turning).

I thought it was your step I heard behind me, Conrad. Take the fagots if you will. The day has many hours, and I am weary. *(Sits on piled fagots.)* Where have you been since morn?

CONRAD

(discontentedly).

Ever with the geese, mother. Ever and always with the geese! They are splashing yonder now in the pond. At sunrise I took them to the top of the hill where I could see the towers of King Hildebrande's castle shining in the sun, and later I led them to the valley where I could spy the hut of Mertram the Miser, half hidden by the trees. Is it true, mother, that old Miser Mertram has more gold than the King himself? *(Seats himself on grass by Dame Alice.)*

DAME ALICE.

So folks say, Conrad. 'Tis hidden safely away somewhere in this forest.

CONRAD.

I wish I were Miser Mertram. You'd never gather fagots again, mother, and you'd live on sweetmeats and curds instead of acorns and black bread. And as for me—this would be the last day I'd ever tend the geese. *(He rises.)*

DAME ALICE.

If wishes came true, Conrad, this world would be a topsy-turvy place. But since 'tis working and not wishing that makes the world go round, 'twere well I were on my way for more fagots, lest twilight overtake me in the wood. *(Rises.)* Look to it, Conrad, that you tend the geese while I am gone, and fall not to complaining and dreaming as is your wont. Complaint never yet healed poverty, and *(tenderly)* day-dreaming is not best for little Gooseherds! *(She exits into wood at left.)*

CONRAD

(flinging himself on grass, center).

Aye, but what if the dream came true? What if I should wake some morning and find myself indeed the Miser Mertram, with all his gold in my pockets. 'Tis said that the goblins and fairies have power to grant any wish that mortals make! *(Dreamily.)* I would it pleased them to grant me mine. Oh, if a goblin would only come I'd say: "Good goblin, I am tired of being Conrad the Gooseherd! Make me some one else." *(Closes his eyes for a moment, as if to picture such bliss.)*

[*During the last sentence Peterkin has entered from the wood, at right, and has crept up behind Conrad with a huge toadstool, upon which he perches elfishly, using it for a seat.*

PETERKIN.

A foolish wish, Conrad, more worthy of your geese than of you.

CONRAD

(amazed, sitting up and staring, and then rubbing his eyes).

Are you indeed a goblin?

PETERKIN

(indignantly).

Do I look like a mortal? Come, blow the goose feathers from your brain and stop staring. Although you've never seen us, you must have heard of us before now, fairies and goblins both.

CONRAD

(half-dreamily).

Heard you? I've sometimes thought I did! Sometimes . . . when the moon comes up, round and golden, over the edge of the dark forest, the air seems full of fairy voices. And on Winter nights, when I'm half asleep, the wind makes goblin music in the trees.

PETERKIN

(nodding).

You've listened better than I thought.

CONRAD.

But I did not know that fairyland was so near.

PETERKIN.

It's always near to them that seek for it, Conrad.

CONRAD.

And will you truly grant my wish?

PETERKIN

(getting off toadstool).

I will do more than that! I will give you three wishes and I will grant them all, as sure as my name is Peterkin!

CONRAD

(dazzled).

Three wishes! That is indeed generous! And shall I see the fairy-folk?

PETERKIN

(naming each one of the fairies, as they advance from the wood in right background).

Aye, that you shall. See, they are coming hither! Dawn-Delight——

DAWN-DELIGHT

(with a pretty, half-mocking obeisance).

From the gates of the morning! *(Conrad snatches off his cap and bows low.)*

PETERKIN.

Silverdew——

SILVERDEW

(same).

From gossamer palace!

PETERKIN.

Rainbow-Wing——

RAINBOW-WING

(same).

From the mists of the air!

PETERKIN

(as Nip and Trip approach, also from wood, right background).

And Nip and Trip, goblins whose law is my word.

NIP AND TRIP

(speaking together, with a low obeisance).

Mortal, what is your will?

CONRAD.

I wish to be Mertram the Miser, for he has more gold than any one else in the world.

[*As Conrad speaks he stands facing the audience, with his back to the fairy footstool on*

which Peterkin has mounted. Peterkin instantly drops across Conrad's shoulders a long tattered cloak, and on his head pops a wig of gray, bushy hair. These things have previously been brought from the wood at right, by Nip and Trip. Silver-dew waves her wand three times. All this should be done with the utmost grace and swiftness. The moment the tattered miser's cloak falls across Conrad's shoulders he bends double with a rheumatic groan.

PETERKIN.

Your wish is granted, Conrad. *(They dance round Conrad in a swirling circle, with joined hands.)*

CONRAD

(in the voice of querulous age).

Have done with your dancing! *(They pause, with mock deference.)* I can scarcely walk. A staff, some one! *(Dawn-Delight gives him a gnarled one.)* Nay, I cannot move! I must sit me down. Alack! Every bone in my body has a pain in it, and every pain a tongue.

DAWN-DELIGHT.

Nay, look how bright the sun is!

CONRAD

(stretching out his hand).

It cannot warm my withered flesh.

RAINBOW-WING

(looking upward).

And how bright the sky!

CONRAD

(trying to look up, and then failing, with the effect of twisting his neck).

What is that to me, who am so bent I cannot see it?

PETERKIN.

And your work—there are no more geese to tend. All your days are free to spend as you will.

CONRAD.

Aye, free to spend in groaning!

DAWN-DELIGHT.

Acorns and black bread you will never taste again. The finest fruits and sweets are yours for the asking.

CONRAD.

Little good that will do me when I have not a tooth in my head!

[*He starts to cross the greensward, leaning on his staff, and groaning heavily.*

PETERKIN.

Think, Conrad, of all the gold you possess!

CONRAD.

What is that compared to all the aches I possess, good Peterkin? Nay, I see now that with Miser Mertram's gold go also Miser Mertram's age and pain! For every piece of money in my wallet there is a twinge in my back. Pray you, give me my second wish, good Peterkin, and you will see how wisely I shall choose a second time.

PETERKIN.

What would you now, Conrad?

CONRAD

(standing in front of toadstool, and facing audience as before).

I would be young King Hildebrande who is the same age as myself, and who has gold and happiness and power besides.

[*Peterkin whisks off Conrad's miser's wig and cloak, and drops in their place a purple robe and a gold crown, with a dark curly wig beneath it. Nip and Trip carry off Miser's costume to wood. With the falling of the King's robe on his shoulders, Conrad gives himself most princely airs.*

CONRAD.

Was there ever so grand a robe? Or so glittering a crown? My very geese would not know me! I will look at my reflection in the pond. *(Turns.)*

DAWN-DELIGHT

(stopping him).

Nay, gently, Conrad! Kings do not use a common goose-pond for a mirror.

CONRAD.

Then I will run to Nathan, the woodcutter's, that all may see me, Nathan and Gretchen, and the rest. *(Picks up his trailing robe, preparing to run with it.)*

RAINBOW-WING.

Kings do not run, Conrad. Neither do they mingle with woodcutter's folk and call them by their names.

CONRAD

(sulkily).

'Faith, 'tis a wearisome thing to be a King, if I cannot do as I please! *(Wearily.)* And my crown is passing heavy!

PETERKIN.

Crowns never yet were light to wear, your Majesty.

CONRAD.

Is there nought I can do for pleasure? Have I no subjects to cheer me and cry: "Long live the King!"? Are there no folk within this wood to give me greeting?

SILVERDEW

There are the peasants, your Majesty. Yonder comes one now—a woman carrying fagots.

[*Dame Alice enters from the wood, left.*

CONRAD

(turning).

Woman! Why, 'tis my mother! *(Goes to meet her, Nip and Trip holding up his trailing robe as if they were his pages.)*

DAME ALICE

(dropping her fagots in amazement).

Just Heaven! It is his gracious Majesty! *(She makes a deep and humble curtsey.)*

CONRAD

(delighted).

Look up and see! Do you not know me, mother?

DAME ALICE

(looking up and then bowing still lower).

I would know my liege sovereign, King Hildebrande, anywhere.

CONRAD.

But 'tis Conrad, not Hildebrande, that stands before you.

DAME ALICE

(aside).

Alas! I see the poor young King hath lost his wits.

CONRAD

(earnestly).

But mother, I am your son.

DAME ALICE.

Nay, your good Majesty, you were never son of mine, as these people of your court will tell you; so drive these shadows from your mind I do beseech you. My son is but a simple little gooseherd, and tends the geese at the wood pond yonder. Indeed, indeed your Majesty is no son of mine. I am only a peasant woman and unused to the ways of court.

CONRAD.

Who *is* my mother if you be not she?

DAME ALICE.

All the world knows that Queen Clotilde is your Majesty's mother, oh sire.

CONRAD

(clutching at her with a cry of sudden terror).

Nay, look at me! Look close! Look close and see if I be not your Conrad! *(She looks a long*

moment, and then sorrowfully shakes her head, as if in pity for his crazed wits. Conrad steps back, mute and dismayed.)

DAME ALICE.

Have I your Majesty's permission to depart? There are still many fagots to be gathered and nightfall comes quickly. *(Conrad makes a royal gesture of assent, and Dame Alice, after bowing, goes slowly back into wood, left, Conrad gazing after her.)*

DAWN-DELIGHT

(approaching him).

Whither now, King Hildebrande? 'Twill soon be dusk, and the queen, your mother, waits you.

CONRAD.

Nay, I have no mother but one, although she does not know me.

SILVERDEW.

There is a luscious feast spread for you at the castle, Conrad.

CONRAD.

'Tis not so sweet as my mother's kiss.

RAINBOW-WING.

There's music there, Conrad, as soft as the music in dreams.

CONRAD

(passionately).

'Twill not sound half so tender as my mother's voice.

PETERKIN.

There will be jeweled lamps shining to light you to bed, Conrad.

CONRAD

(still more passionately).

I'd rather have the loveshine of my mother's eyes. What are feasts and music and jeweled lamps to me? *(Despairingly.)* I want my mother, and I only wish to be Conrad the Gooseherd, Conrad the Gooseherd, Conrad the Gooseherd! *(Flings himself sobbing on the ground. His cloak, which has become unfastened, is swiftly removed by Nip and Trip. His crown and scepter are likewise taken. His closed eyes and deep breathing show that he has sobbed himself to sleep.)*

SILVERDEW

(bending over him with passes of her wand).

Sleep! And let these wishes seem
Like the semblance of a dream
Lightly dreamed and lightly sped,
Leaving with you in its stead
Sweet Content, your days to fill.
Sleep! It is the fairies will!

[*Fairies and Goblins vanish into wood, background. Enter Dame Alice from left; she bends over the sleeping Conrad.*

DAME ALICE

(rousing him).

Why, Conrad! Asleep so early?

CONRAD

(opening his eyes and then flinging an arm about her).

Mother! You know me now? Now that I'm not the King?

DAME ALICE

(rising).

The King! Good lack! The child's still dreaming!

CONRAD

(rising, rubbing his eyes and looking about).

And they're gone, too, the fairies and the goblins. And I'm here with you and not at the castle! And my three wishes have vanished like smoke! *(Dame Alice goes to hut at right.)* It must have been a dream. And yet . . . and yet . . .! To be myself and none other; to make the most of what I have and never sigh for what I have not—that is fairy wisdom. And right glad am I that I am neither Miser

Mertram with his creaking joints, nor King Hildebrande with his queen mother but only Conrad the Gooseherd. And now I think 'tis time I fetched the geese! *(Exits, running blithely, left.)*

CURTAIN

COSTUMES

CONRAD: Buff coat and hose. Leather belt at waist with leather jerkin fastened to it. Round, soft cap of felt pushed far back on his head. In it is stuck jauntily a long, white goose feather.

DAME ALICE: Dark maroon skirt. Black bodice laced over white chemizette. White apron, clean, but a little worn and tattered, it has a border of maroon. A white Normandy peasant cap.

PETERKIN is swathed from head to heel in tight fitting goblin suit of mouse color. Peaked cap of same, very tall.

DAWN-DELIGHT: Gauzy pale pink robe. Wings deepening from pale pink at the shoulder to deep pink at the outer edges.

SILVERDEW: White gauzy robe spangled with silver. Silver spangled wings.

RAINBOW-WING: Gauzy robe of palest forget-me-not blue. Rainbow-colored wings, very delicately tinted.

NIP and TRIP: Suits exactly like that of Peterkin, only in brown.

The mushroom which Peterkin carries should be made stoutly of wood, and then be covered with white cambric, tinted around the edges with mushroom color —the peculiar pinky brown. The sides may slope a little, but the top must be level.

THE ENCHANTED GARDEN

CAST

WILD ROSE
PRINCE BUTTERFLY
BUMBLE BEE
PEAS BLOSSOM
LILY
MIGNONETTE
POPPY
IRIS
WILL-O'-THE-WISP
THE QUEEN OF HEARTS
Other Peasblossoms, Poppies, etc.

DRAMATIC DIRECTIONS

THIS is a June play. The schoolroom should be hung with green leaves or real or artificial flowers. A green floor covering, if possible. In the center of the stage there should be a seat or throne covered with moss-green cambric. While the prologue is being spoken the flowers stand in group in background. The blinds of the schoolroom are pulled down to give an effect of darkness. With the end of Will-o'-the-Wisp's speech the blinds are raised to show that the night is over and it is morning in the garden. The children should wear their summer dresses, and over them large petals of tissue paper or glazed cambric. Hats shaped like the petals or bells of flowers. White dress with red hearts on it for the Queen; pink hat and dress for Wild Rose; stripes of yellow tissue paper basted to the boy's suit of the bee; large tinted cardboard wings for the butterfly, etc., etc. The prologue is spoken by Pansy, whose dress should be yellow and purple cambric, or tissue paper leaves, like an overskirt. In connection with the play read the children all kinds of pretty garden verses—"A Garden is a Lovesome Thing," by Thomas Brown, etc., etc.

The play is especially suited to be given out doors at the closing exercises of a country school, or a woodland or garden entertainment. For this fuller directions follow.

PROLOGUE

Spoken by Pansy

My name is Pansy, and my part
Is to enchain each mind and heart
Until, perforce, you see with me
A garden, loved of bird and bee,
Where stately lilies raise their heads,
And poppies border all the beds;
Where starry mignonette is found,
And moss and grass and dew abound.
Think that before your mind's clear eyes
The garden dark and silent lies
Till you behold a curious light
Dancing and wav'ring through the night.
Will-o'-the-Wisp is drawing near!
His step so soft you scarce can hear!
And thus, before the break of day,
He will begin our little play.

THE ENCHANTED GARDEN

The scene is a garden, preferably a real one. If this is not possible and the play is wished for Winter use, it can be given indoors. In this case the stage should be covered with green baize and green potted plants such as ferns and palms can be used effectively.

It is supposed to be night when the play begins. The poppies stand in the background on each side of a throne covered with green moss.

In the center of the stage stands Will-o'-the-Wisp with his lighted lantern. As he speaks he sways his lantern to and fro in the darkness.

WILL-O'-THE-WISP.

Hush! The flowers are sleeping! See them, one and all,
Mignonette and Iris and the Lily tall,
Drowsy crimson poppies nodding by the wall.

When the dew is falling through the summer night
Hither do I wander with my lantern bright,
Guarding all the sleepers by its elfin light.

I can feel the night wind softly passing by,
Hear the crickets chirping and the gray owl's cry,
Watch the pale moon gliding through the cloudy sky;

I am free to wander where the fairies play,
Through the fens and gardens nimbly do I stray,
But I always vanish with the break of day!

[*Exit Will-o'-the-Wisp. As he goes the dawn breaks, a rosy glow over all the garden. The flowers slowly raise their heads.*

MIGNONETTE.

Awaken! Awaken! For lo, 'tis the dawn!
Night time is over——

POPPY

(stretching).

I feel I must yawn!

MIGNONETTE.

Oh, all things are stirring—the air blows so sweet!
'Tis only the garden that's still fast asleep—
The Poppies so drowsily nodding their heads,
The Sweet Peas in nightcaps asleep in their beds!
So while through the stillness clear bird voices break,
Come, let's show the world that we, too, are awake!

[*The flowers join in a slow dance, minuet-like in its dignity, and resembling the swayng of flowers in the breeze. When they return to their places Wild Rose is discovered in the center of the stage, looking timidly about her.*

LILY.

Mignonette, pray you look! A new flower is here!

MIGNONETTE.

She doesn't belong to the garden, that's clear!

POPPY.

A very great liberty for her to take!

WILD ROSE.

I'm just a Wild Rose—I strayed in by mistake
Last night—in the dark. Oh, pray don't think me bold,
For garden's are very exclusive I'm told!

[*While Wild Rose is speaking the other flowers whisper together, with many disparaging glances and much shaking of heads.*

IRIS

(haughtily).

The flowers who grow here are flowers every one knows,
But none of them ever have heard of a Rose!

SWEET PEA.

You *say* you're a Wild Rose; but how do *we* know!

LILY

And where do you live?

WILD ROSE.

Why, by roadways I grow!

LILY.

By roadways, where every one sees you! Dear! Dear!
There's little seclusion in *that* life I fear!

POPPY.

And who are your gardeners?

WILD ROSE.

The sun and the rain.

SWEET PEA

(to Poppy).

My dear, she knows little of pruning, 'tis plain!

WILD ROSE.

Yet all flowers are related—a cousin am I
To fair Mistress Lily who's standing close by.

LILY

(haughtily).

A mere country cousin! Pray stay in your place!
Field families always are held in disgrace.

(shortly and snappily)

Not even mentioned—so lowly they're rated.
You grow near a road. You're not cultivated.

WILD ROSE

(gently).

I never have lived behind walls, it is true;
Yet we share, do we not, the wind and the dew?

LILY

(aside to Sweet Pea).

The Wild Rose has thorns!

IRIS.

She is not very tall.
Her outlook on life must be lowly and small.

MIGNONETTE.

Pray, who are your friends?

WILD ROSE

(brightening).

The staunch Blackberry Vine,
And Blue Bell and Daisy and sweet Columbine.

POPPY.

Sweet "Columbine"! "Blue Bell"! What strange names are these!
"Blackberry" and "Daisy"! Do listen, Sweet Peas!

IRIS

(with aloofness).

The country's a very strange place, I am told.

WILD ROSE

(eagerly).

The meadows are starred with the Buttercups gold,
The bee hovers and hums—the Bobolink sings,
The Swallow flies by with a glad rush of wings—
The fields stretch away to clap hands with the sky—
And——

LILY

(tartly).

There! Hush your chatter! Here's Prince Butterfly.

[*Prince Butterfly enters.*

MIGNONETTE.

Good morning, dear Prince!

PRINCE BUTTERFLY

(flitting from one flower to another, teasingly).

Ah, most rare Mignonette,
The loveliest flower in the garden! And yet——
The Iris is fairer. *(Goes to Iris.)* Ah, pretty Sweet Pea,
Pink sunbonnets still are in fashion, I see!

SWEET PEA

(flattered).

Do tell us the news, Prince!

PRINCE BUTTERFLY

(as flowers crowd about him, with the exception of Wild Rose, whom he has not perceived, and who stands by herself).

What! Have you not heard?
I thought it might come by some gossipy bird!
Well, my news then is this: the great Queen of Hearts
Will leave for one morning her baking of tarts
To choose from this garden the loveliest flower.

POPPY

(smoothing her dress).

My petals are charming!

LILY

(anxiously).

I hope it won't shower!

SWEET PEA

(fastening her sunbonnet).

And no one can tell which bright flower she'll like best——

MIGNONETTE

(airily).

I'm sure I'm the sweetest!

IRIS

(regally).

And I'm the best dressed!

[*The Flowers return to their places. Prince Butterfly suddenly perceives Wild Rose.*

PRINCE BUTTERFLY.

By my wings! Who is this?

IRIS.

'Tis only a weed
Who came from the country.

PRINCE BUTTERFLY

(pausing by Wild Rose).

A strange weed, indeed!
None other than Wild Rose, than whom I declare
There is not a flower in the garden more fair!

POPPY.

Dear Prince, you are hasty—pray don't be beguiled!

IRIS.

She says she's well-born; but *we* know she grows wild.

PRINCE BUTTERFLY

(wheeling suddenly, his light manner gone, his voice filled with indignation).

And wild were *you* once, ere the garden you knew,

So be not so proud of your bearing and hue! *(Iris hides face.)*

(cuttingly, to Lily)

Wild Lilies grow tall in the marsh and the sedge!

(to Poppy)

Your family comes from a wheat field's bright edge!

(to Mignonette)

The stars and the tufts that so proudly you wear
Are gems which the Rocket Weed family share!

(to Sweet Pea)

Where sunshine lies warmest and salt breezes blow,
On meadow and dune do *your* relatives grow!

(To Wild Rose, bowing low.)

While you, sweetest Rose (with your petals unfurled!)
Are sought for and loved throughout all of the world
In hut or in palace. This garden seemed bare
Till chance brought you to us, to grace it, most fair!

[*The flowers stand with hanging heads, utterly abashed, unable to look up. Two short blasts of a herald's trumpet are sounded off stage, and Bumble Bee enters, going fussily about, not noticing what has taken place.*

BUMBLE BEE.

Here I come humming—the velvet Bee!
Busy as ever you plainly see!

Green Mignonette, and gay Lily Bell,
Which of you all has honey to sell?
For here am I with my sacks to hold
All you can give me of pollen gold.
Butterfly loves to dally and shirk,
But as for me—I delight in work.

[*Queen of Hearts appears in background. Bee perceives her, and instantly holds himself erect as a herald, and comes down center to front of stage.*

Hark! With my droning trumpet I boom:
"The Queen is coming! Give room! Give room!"
Down through your borders a pathway make,
For one of the flowers the Queen will take!

[*Queen of Hearts comes down center.*

QUEEN.

I'm weary of Lilies, I'm tired of Sweet Peas—
Mignonette and gay Poppies—all fail to please.
But here is a Wild Rose—with petals of pink—

WILD ROSE

(very much confused).

I came in by mistake——

QUEEN

(kindly).

No great harm, I think!
You speak of the country—of long summer hours,
Of dew and of sunshine, of shadows and showers.

BUMBLE BEE.

So honey-sweet, she, I can scarce keep away!

PRINCE BUTTERFLY.

I have heard Will-o'-the-Wisp and fairy folk say
That when a Wild Rose doth her petals unfold
'Tis plain to be seen that her heart is of gold!

QUEEN.

Enough! then no longer I'll go on my quest,
For this is the flower that I choose from the rest.
My garden without her would not be complete.

PRINCE BUTTERFLY

(delighted).

I vow she is charming!

BUMBLE BEE

(sturdily).

I swear she is sweet!

QUEEN.

No Rose in my garden has ever yet grown,
So this is the flower that I choose for my own.

(To Prince Butterfly and Bumble Bee.)

As she was content common roadways to grace
Now deck her with dew-pearls and gossamer lace.

(to Wild Rose)

Grow queenly and splendid; for every one knows
No garden is perfect that boasts not a Rose!

[*Wild Rose bows low and kisses the Queen's hand. Bumble Bee picks up the Queen's train, like a page. Butterfly holds her fan. The Queen leads Wild Rose to the mossy throne in background. Bumble Bee and Prince Butterfly stand on each side of the throne while the Queen crowns Wild Rose with a splendid wreath of laurel. Then Exit the Queen, with Prince Butterfly and Bumble Bee attending her.*

IRIS

(penitently).

I fear my fine raiment has rendered me blind!

MIGNONETTE.

A garden may often be narrow, I find.

LILY.

While a tall wall that hides all the world from our view
Is not half so fine as horizons wide blue!

ALL THE FLOWERS IN UNISON.

Forgive us, oh Wild Rose!

WILD ROSE

(rising, standing on steps of mossy throne, and speaking very clearly and sweetly).

Nay, what's to forgive!
The past is forgotten. In peace let us live,
Content without envy or rancor to grow—
For all of us started in Eden, you know!

CURTAIN

COSTUMES

WILD ROSE: Short dress with petal-like folds of deep pink.

BUMBLE BEE: Black suit striped with yellow. Gold belt. Gray gauze wings.

WILL-O'-THE-WISP: Black suit, spangled. He carries a lighted lantern.

PRINCE BUTTERFLY: Suit of brown. Large varicolored wings.

PEAS BLOSSOM: Short white dress. Pink sunbonnet.

LILY: Long orange-colored robe with black velvet dots.

MIGNONETTE: Deep green dress, covered with tiny red and pale green stars.

IRIS: White trailing dress with pale lavender overdress cut like Fleur-de-Lis petals.

POPPY: Crimson dress, short, made of shimmering silk. Huge red poppy leaf hat.

THE QUEEN OF HEARTS: White robe with red Hearts. Long train.

The other Poppies are in the same crimson costume, but the Sweet Peas wear white dresses with different colored sunbonnets, pale yellow, deep purple, white, etc.

Appropriate music for the flower dance would be Nevin's "Narcissus," or Lang's "Flower Song." Music should also be played during the pantomime where the Queen leads Wild Rose to the throne.

NIMBLE-WIT AND FINGERKIN

CAST

KATINKA, daughter of Nathan the woodcutter
DAME DIFFICULTY, a witch
TRY, a sprite
NIMBLE-WIT, another
FIRST FINGERKIN, "Thumbling" } Dwarfs
SECOND FINGERKIN, } Dwarfs
THIRD FINGERKIN, } Dwarfs
FOURTH FINGERKIN, } Dwarfs
FIFTH FINGERKIN, "Little Fingerkin," } Dwarfs

DRAMATIC DIRECTIONS

WHILE fuller directions follow, for this play have a plain deal table and two or three deal chairs for the furniture of the schoolroom stage; a spinning wheel made of a small wagon wheel fastened to a wooden frame, and having an imitation spindle which the boys can easily construct, or, what is easier still, a loom made of a simple frame of laths with threads stretched across it (see any authentic picture of old-fashioned looms or spinning wheels).

Katinka should wear a cap of glazed cambric or white tissue paper with a border of gay red and blue tissue paper pasted on it. A deep girdle and pouch pocket made of glazed cambric with a red, blue, and green border basted to it, to give it a quaint, old-world peasant air. For Dame Difficulty, a long black dress, black shawl, and muffler worn as a hood. From under this hood float long wisps of gray hair made from the ends of frayed rope. Draw charcoal lines about her forehead, mouth, and eyes, to give her a truly witch-like appearance. Nimble-Wit should have a scarlet girdle and cap; Try, a silver wand, crown and girdle, made of silver paper pasted to cambric. The Fingerkins should wear pinky-brown tissue paper caps, all alike, to give them an elf-like look.

The cupboard later mentioned can be made of drygoods boxes. An imitation window, made by putting up a little curain of dark glazed cambric, is an addition, but not strictly necessary. The fireplace is made of four good sized drygoods boxes from which the covers have been removed. Nail two of them together, and place a board across the top, one end resting on them, and the other on the other two. Paint or chalk them red, leaving white lines in squares, as if it were built of bricks. Or paste red tissue paper all over it, cut in brick shapes. Smudge it a little with charcoal to give it the effect of sootiness and long use. Have a pair of andirons made of cardboard wired and painted black, and beneath them embers of red paper and black coal. Let the children use their own ingenuity in helping to fashion the interior. For a more elaborate setting and array of costumes, see the directions that follow. This is an Industrial play, and the teacher would do well to dwell on such aspects of it as are applicable to the everyday life of the schoolroom.

NIMBLE-WIT AND FINGERKIN

SCENE: *Dame Difficulty's house in the midst of a wood. A somewhat dark room. At the left a wide-mouthed chimneyplace. A large black witch's caldron simmering on the coals. Above the chimneyplace hang several rude iron cooking utensils, notably a large iron spoon. At the left background a window curtained in dark cambric. At the left background a door opening on the forest without. Between the window and the door a dark arras. Against the right wall a cupboard. In the center of the room a deal table and chair.*

On the table a plate of dark bread, and a candle burning. To the left of the table a spinning-wheel and stool. On the floor near the wheel a heap of gray, tangled flax.

At the rise of the curtain Dame Difficulty, an evil-looking witch, is seated, busily spinning. From time to time, as she spins, she raises her head, as if listening. It is drawing towards twilight and occasionally the wind wails without. After a moment Dame Difficulty leaves her wheel and bends over the simmering pot.

DAME DIFFICULTY.

Brew! Brew!
Nightbane and rue!

Herbs from strange fens and morasses up-torn—
Bud of the Languor Flower, root of the Thorn!
Bubbling and brewing
To mortal's undoing
The Draught of Discouragement ever I keep.
My black herbs I steep.

(Bending over pot.)

Be subtle and strong!
Draw fast! Be not long!

[*Hovers a moment over brew with weird, menacing gestures, and then goes to wheel, and begins to spin.*

Hist! Hist!
Linger and List!
All things that the shadows and swamp-dew have kissed!
This way and that does my Wonder-Thread twist!
Reel! Reel!
Each turn o' the wheel
Is weaving and winding for woe or for weal!
From the Fens of Despair have I gathered the flax,
In swamp and foul lair have I sought the wasp's wax
That smooth it may run
When once 'tis begun.
Gray—gray is the weaving,
And strong past believing!
But he who has striven,
To him it is given

To turn it to gold.
All power shall he hold
Over me and my wheel.
Therefore riddle and reel
Till the thread's end I feel!

[*As her chant ends there comes a timid rap on the door without.*

DAME DIFFICULTY.

Who's there?

KATINKA

(clearly, without).

'Tis I, Katinka, daughter of Nathan the wood-cutter.

DAME DIFFICULTY.

Lift the latch and enter.

KATINKA.

(entering, unlighted lantern in hand).

Good Dame, I have lost my way in the wood, and came upon the tangled, twisted path that led me to your door.

DAME DIFFICULTY.

Sit you down and rest. There is bread on that platter yonder. Eat, if you will.

KATINKA

(prettily).

I thank you. (*Sits and eats, but with faint-hearted nibbles that show she does not relish it.)*

DAME DIFFICULTY

(keenly, looking up from her spinning).

Do you not like my food?

KATINKA

(frankly).

It has a bitter taste.

DAME DIFFICULTY

(dryly).

Few find the Bread of Difficulty sweet.

KATINKA.

There are hours when *nothing* seems so! This has been such a long, long day, good dame, and nought has gone right in it since early morning, and now, at sunset, I have lost my way. 'Tis the first time that such an ill thing has ever befallen me, for I know the forest paths by heart, yet this is the only twilight I ever came upon your strange little house with its heavy door.

DAME DIFFICULTY.

Aye, all people come to that door, soon or late.

KATINKA

(wondering).

But have I never seen you before, good dame?

DAME DIFFICULTY

(turning and facing her).

Nay, never before, I think, so look well at me now, and see that you do not forget me! *(Katinka stares, rather frightened, and wholly unable to remove her eyes.)* Do you think me beautiful that you look so long?

KATINKA

(withdrawing her eyes).

I did not mean to stare, good dame. Rudeness would be indeed an ill payment for your hospitality. *(Rises.)* And now I feel I can return in safety, for the gleam of the charcoal burners' fires will light me through the dusk.

DAME DIFFICULTY

(clutching her).

Never so fast, oh, woodcutter's child! Those who enter the door of Dame Difficulty go not forth so easily. Before you cross that threshold again there are three tasks you shall accomplish. *(Indicates.)* I turn the tangled flax to silver; you shall spin d to gold; and make my bitter brew a thing ness! *(Leering.)* Drink deep of my caldron!

KATINKA

(bewildered).

But, dame——

DAME DIFFICULTY

(fiercely).

Speak not till I have finished! These things shall you do ere I return again. Work swiftly, oh woodcutter's child! Who lingers under my roof has need of every moment! *(Exit Dame Difficulty through door in background, with a menacing backward glance.)*

KATINKA

(slowly).

"Has need of every moment!" What means she? *(More resolutely.)* Nay, I must not let myself be affrighted by Dame Difficulty! *(Runs to door.)* 'Tis bolted! How noiselessly she turned the key! *(Shakes it.)* 'Twould take more strength than I have in my bones to move such a weight an inch! *(Runs to window, pulls curtain, looks out.)* Fastened! Barred! *(Runs to fireplace and falling on knees examines it.)* Alas! I could never crawl up so steep a chimney! *(Touching spinning wheel.)* And this wheel! I would fain know how I am ever to spin it and make golden so gray a thread! And this flax—how can I turn it to silver! And this brew *(Bends over witch's caldron)* 'tis so foul and thick that all the fire in the world will not go an inch towards sweetening it! Alack for the

hour I ever crossed her threshold! *(Bending over caldron.)* She said I must taste of the brew! *(Sips at it gingerly with a huge iron spoon that hangs near by.)* It has an ill savor! *(Puts down spoon and rises.)* Time shortens! Night comes apace. I must do the best I can. *(With growing despair.)* And yet—and yet—my heart grows heavier, and heavier! Oh, I can never do the tasks, I know! *(Crosses to table, and leaning on it hides head in arms.)*

TRY

(dancing lightly out from behind arras in back).

Nay, Katinka, be not so down-hearted, since I, a sprite named Try, have come to help you.

KATINKA

(raising her head).

I heard no step! How came you hither?

TRY

(looking cautiously about).

Hist! 'Tis a secret! The very walls might speak it if they knew! By my white magic I can make myself as tall as a mountain or as small as a mouse. And 'tis when I am small as a mouse that I creep behind yonder arras, and only come out again when I see that I am greatly needed. Little does Dame Difficulty guess that I lodge beneath her very roof! *(Mysteriously.)* Aye, and there be others who lodge here also!

KATINKA

(pleadingly).

Good Try, will you not help me?

TRY.

I cannot help you, Katinka; but I can show you where help lies. It is you who must help yourself.

KATINKA

(beseeching).

But I so greatly need your aid!

TRY.

There is aid in my words, Katinka, when I tell you that if you do not master Dame Difficulty she will master you! But once having mastered her, whenever you meet her, you need fear her no more!

KATINKA.

Indeed, indeed I will do your bidding, good sprite, though there are so many things to be accomplished that my heart grows heavy at the very thought of them. The brewing—— *(Bends to taste from caldron.)*

TRY

(passionately).

Put down the draught, Katinka! Touch it not on your life! Already one sip of it has made your heart

like lead. 'Tis the Draught of Discouragement—Dame Difficulty's ill brewing!

KATINKA.

Is there no way to sweeten it?

TRY

(taking leaves of an herb from girdle and gives it to Katinka).

But one—the leaf of a little herb called Hope. 'Tis a common plant, and grows by every roadside.

KATINKA

(after sprinkling herb leaves into caldron).

Already it begins to clear! *(Goes to flax.)* How tangled the flax is! *(She begins to work on it.)*

TRY

(singing).

Those who heed the voice of Try
Will find that Nimble-Wit is nigh!
Come, then, clever Nimble-Wit—
To this skein your magic fit!

NIMBLE-WIT

(springing out nimbly from behind the arras in background).

I have lain here for long hours waiting for Try's

voice to arouse me, and now that I may caper as I will, I am at your service, Katinka.

KATINKA.

Pray you, good Nimble-Wit, what will you do to aid me?

NIMBLE-WIT.

I will summon the most wonderful little wizards in the world—the dwarfs who always move at my bidding.

KATINKA.

And who are they?

NIMBLE-WIT.

They are none but the Five Fingerkins, Thumbling and his brothers!

[*The Five Fingerkins spring out from behind the arras in background at these words.*

THUMBLING

(as the other Fingerkins stand in a row and bow low).

What is your will with us, good Nimble-Wit?

NIMBLE-WIT.

My will is that you should aid Katinka. Yonder is the flax of failure—it must be turned to silver. There is the Thread of Difficulty—it must be spun to gold. And Katinka herself must do the spinning.

SECOND FINGERKIN

(going to flax).

Your will is our pleasure, Nimble-Wit!

THIRD FINGERKIN

(joining Second Fingerkin).

You will see how fast the work will fly!

FOURTH FINGERKIN

(at wheel).

My place will be by Katinka!

FIFTH FINGERKIN

(in a squeaky little voice).

Thumbling, come help me by the wheel!

[*Thumbling and Fifth Fingerkin seat themselves on the floor, left, and wind the thread that is made from the flax which is being spun; Try stands near the brew at fireplace, occasionally stirring up the coals, and Nimble-Wit hovers about Katinka at the wheel. During all the previous business, while the Fingerkins have been finding their places, Katinka under the pantomimic directions of Nimble-Wit has been learning to spin.*

FIRST FINGERKIN

(busily).

Aye, 'tis of a truth that Dame Difficulty can never master us!

[*For a few moments the work goes on in silence, all doing their part in it, making it a very animated pantomime. Then, gradually Katinka shows signs of tiring—the wheel goes slower; she yawns and stretches.*

KATINKA.

Alack! 'Tis a wearisome thing to turn a wheel!

TRY

(from place by hearthstone).

Spin! Spin! Katinka! Let not a moment pass!

KATINKA

(impatiently).

Out upon such labor, say I!

TRY

(disturbed).

Beseech you, heed my voice!

KATINKA

(more and more impatiently).

This flax! How often it breaks! Never will it become gold!

NIMBLE-WIT

(warningly).

The wheel is stopping, Katinka!

KATINKA

(pettishly).

I care not! *(Stops wheel with a jerk, and leans back indolently in her chair. The instant she stops work all the others stop work also, as if suddenly frozen—Try, in the act of poking the coals, becomes a statue; the Fingerkins, with work upraised in their hands, become absolutely rigid. Nimble-Wit stands motionless behind her chair. Katinka finally drowses. There is a moment's utter silence, which is broken by the soft fall of a coal on the hearth. Katinka starts, opens her eyes, looks about, and perceives what has happened.)* Why, they are all like statues! *(Runs about, trying to move them, but in vain.)* They do not move! They do not hear! They do not even answer! And my spinning—'twill come to nought! The witch may soon return—Oh, I must work with all my strength—with all my soul—— *(Runs back to chair, seats herself and begins to spin. With the first revolution of the wheel the Fingerkins slowly and silently begin to stir. Katinka suddenly looks up and sees them.)* They wake! They stir!

TRY.

Aye, for the spell is broken!

NIMBLE-WIT.

'Tis you who rule us and give us power. Without you we can do nought—the Fingerkins are helpless. When you are idle, we are idle also. When you would work we spring to your least word!

KATINKA

(tremblingly keeping on with her spinning).

Alas! good Nimble-Wit, what shall I do when Dame Difficulty returns?

NIMBLE-WIT

(quietly smiling).

Long ere that you will be on your way homeward, Katinka. For when these tasks are done, the latch of Difficulty will fall of its self, and you will be free.

TRY.

And to-morrow, Katinka, all this will seem like a dream, and you will say to yourself: "What strange things happened while I slept!"

KATINKA.

(wistfully).

And must I bid farewell to you then for always?

TRY.

Nay, this is not our only home, though it is beneath this roof that we have become best acquainted. We

have other dwelling places. My true home is in people's hearts.

NIMBLE-WIT.

And mine in their heads.

THUMBLING.

And ours—Brothers, shall I tell her the secret of who we are and where we live?

[*All Fingerkins nod vigorously in assent.*

THUMBLING.

We're the dwarfs who come at each child's command.

SECOND FINGERKIN.

By our art Dame Difficulty's tasks are spanned.

THIRD FINGERKIN.

Would you see our home? Then look at your hand!

ALL FINGERKINS

(together, jovially).

We're the Five Little Fingerkins!

THUMBLING.

There's never a task we can't put through!

SECOND FINGERKIN.

We're always ready your will to do!

FOURTH FINGERKIN.

And I'd call quite often if I were you.

ALL FINGERKINS

(as before).

On the Five Little Fingerkins!

TRY.

Come, look to the brewing, Katinka!

[*Katinka crosses to hearthstone and bends over caldron. Incense is burned behind the scenes so that it fills the room.*

KATINKA.

It has grown clear, and has the sweetest fragrance!

TRY

(nodding).

It is the savor of Heartsease!

[*Sound of a latch falling without.*

KATINKA.

What sound was that?

TRY.

The falling of the Latch of Difficulty!

THUMBLING

(jumping up).

Brothers, our tasks are finished. *(During the work that has gone before, the Fingerkins have been adding gold and silver tinsel threads to what they do, so that now it shimmers in the candlelight.)* And here is your lantern, Katinka, to light you homeward through the dark forest.

NIMBLE-WIT.

And we will go with you and guard you to the door.

KATINKA

(sorrowfully).

Only to the door, good Nimble-Wit? Alas! I had not thought to part with you so soon!

NIMBLE-WIT.

You shall not part from us, Katinka, for now that you have truly come to know us we will be your servants always. But say to yourself: "I will try," and we will appear!

TRY.

Lead the way, Nimble-Wit. Come, Fingerkins, with the lantern!

[*Delicate music off stage. Exit all into the forest; the door closes after them. A pause. Dame Difficulty lifts the latch and enters.*

DAME DIFFICULTY.

Gone? Aye, when the latch fell loose to my touch I feared that it was so! The child has escaped me! She has mastered me! *(Peers further about.)* Strange spirits have been at work while I was absent! The brew is clear and fragrant; the flax is touched with silver! *(Lifts candle and looks at thread.)* Aha! I see she has learned white magic, that woodcutter's daughter, for even the gray Thread of Difficulty has been turned to gold!

COSTUMES

KATINKA: Peasant costume. Scarlet skirt with three rows of black ribbon on it. Black velvet bodice, white guimpe, and sleeves. Black velvet belt and pouch pocket, richly embroidered in many colors. White " Normandy " cap. Hair in braids.

DAME DIFFICULTY: Black robe, black mantle, and black witch's hood. From beneath this hang long gray elf locks.

TRY: Pale lavender robe falling in long graceful folds to her feet. Angel sleeves. Square neck edged with silver. Silver spangles. Silver wand and wreath in hair.

NIMBLE-WIT: Dark gray suit, doublet, and hose. Scarlet girdle, and scarlet feather in cap.

FINGERKINS: Light brown suits, all alike, and of the same style, in a measure, as Nimble-Wit's. Light brown peaked caps. Brown leather belts.

A LITTLE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

CHARACTERS

In Order of their Entrance

DAME DECISION
THE LITTLE PILGRIM
STEADFAST
KNOWLEDGE
COURAGE
JOYOUSNESS
FALSEPRIDE
SELFISHNESS
BOASTFULNESS
FAINTHEART
HONESTY
ANGER

DRAMATIC DIRECTIONS

THE setting of this play calls for two deal tables and four benches. Chairs will do if no benches can be had. There should be two entrances, as indicated in the further directions for the play. These can be arranged by means of screens or draped clothes-horses. In case screens are used be sure to turn the plain side to the audience. The fireplace is made by nailing dry-goods boxes together with a board across the top, and painting the whole to represent brick. Embers of red paper and black coal. An empty bookcase for a cupboard.

Over her everyday clothes the child who plays Dame Decision should wear a white Puritan cap and kerchief. All the children, including those who play the part of the vices, should wear the long "Pilgrim" or "Traveler's" cloaks that were the custom in those days. This will hide their everyday apparel and make them sufficiently "costumed" to suit any schoolroom needs. The cloaks can be made of two or three yards of cheese cloth. (See any well-known picture of Pilgrims or Puritans). Russet cloak for the Pilgrim. Old-rose cloak for Steadfast. Purple cloak for Knowledge. For Courage a pale gray cloak, a helmet fashioned of cardboard and covered with silver paper, and

a belt to which a sword is attached. Falsepride, a cloak of figured Japanese crêpe, the kind that has gold and flowers on it. Selfishness, black cloak. Boastfulness, dark green cloak, yellow cardboard helmet and breastplate. Faintheart, cloak one-half blue, and one-half black. Anger, scarlet cloak. Honesty, dull brown cloak, pointed black hat made of a peaked tissue paper cap to which is fastened a black cardboard rim. Pack made of black cardboard box strung with black cords at shoulder. The play is suited for any month or holiday when the teacher wishes to hold the Pilgrims most in mind. For this reason it would make a good Thanksgiving play. Tell the children the story of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, and show them the really beautiful pictures that accompany the text in many good editions. Show them also that the virtues that the little Pilgrim finally possessed were just such virtues as the real Pilgrims brought to this new land of ours—and that they clung to them in spite of war, famine, loneliness, and disaster. Had the Pilgrims been of the same stripe as Faintheart and Selfishness they would never have taken the perilous voyage in the Mayflower. But Honesty, Courage, Steadfastness, Knowledge, Joyousness (Cheerfulness in their case), were what they brought with them. Have the children find which of the Pilgrim heroes stood most clearly for each of these separate virtues, Standish, Alden, and many more. In connection with the play read them such stories as will interest them most. "A Little Captive Lad," etc., etc. Show the children that

the little Pilgrim in the play is the prototype of all Pilgrims. Directions for a full stage production of the play herewith follow; and the teacher should read the directions aloud, for even if the schoolroom cannot compass all the settings and costumes, it will give the children an idea of the atmosphere and costumes of the time. If the play is given in the schoolroom at Thanksgiving exercises, the following prologue relating to the Pilgrims may be spoken by a boy dressed as a Town Crier. He should wear a tall Pilgrim hat, deep white Pilgrim collar and a pair of white cuffs. A long dark cloak fastened at his shoulders, and on his everyday shoes a pair of wide gilt paper buckles securely fastened. Around his neck a white cardboard placard bearing the words: TOWN CRIER. He should read the prologue from a printed slip rolled to represent parchment. In his left hand he carries a bell. If the play is given at any other time than Thanksgiving, this prologue is not recited; but in either case the one by Dame Decision is always said.

SPECIAL THANKSGIVING PROLOGUE

FRIENDS, such a scene as here shall be
Was oft enacted over-sea
In those old wondrous far-off days
When Pilgrims with their proud, staunch ways
Refused the wrong and chose the right,
And let their sureness be their might.
Their praises, therefore, let us sing
'Twas they who made our Thanksgiving!
(And spread a feast on that far morn
To bless the garnered fruit and corn—
The apples and the golden maize—
For these they gave all thanks and praise!)
Wise-hearted Pilgrims, true and sure,
Quick to endeavor and endure,
'Twas they with work of brain and hand
Who sought and founded our new land!
They had no thought of ease or pelf,
They bid farewell to Love of Self,
They bravely passed through times of stress,
Yet gave not way to Boastfulness.
They conquered Anger and Falsepride,
No Faintheart could with them abide.
Grim fear before their stout souls flew,
Courage they had, and Knowledge, too,

And Steadfastness! While in each heart
High Joyousness bore equal part,
Or else how could the Pilgrims face
From day to day the strange new place
Beset with famine and with foe,
With hardship, bleakness, wind, and snow!
They suffered hunger, sickness, cold,
They had few goods and little gold.
It was the *spirit* that they brought
Which did the marvels that they wrought—
A spirit dauntless, gallant, high,
Bequeathed to us to profit by.
So, comrades, as there now draws near
The time of bounty and of cheer,
Remember what the Pilgrims bore
In coming to this unknown shore,
And keep the land they gave to you
Forever splendid, great, and true!

PROLOGUE

To be Spoken by Dame Decision

FRIENDS, to what follows list ye well
And we will straightway strive to tell
A Little Pilgrim's history.
How at an inn he came to be;
What friends he made, what foes he met;
How in the end he was beset.
Here for a space there shall abide
Selfishness, Anger, and Falsepride.
Staunch Courage with his broadsword bright,
And Joyousness with footsteps light.
Our curtain, rising, shall disclose
What comrades the young Pilgrim chose
To company his onward way.
So, hearken, friends, unto our play,
And whether it shall please or pall,
We cry your patience for it all.

A LITTLE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS *

In the Manner of a Morality

SCENE: *Dame Decision's Inn,* 1678. *Door in center background. Another door at left. On each side of the door in background are windows curtained in dark damask.*

In exactly the same place at right and left, halfway from the center of the stage, two dark wooden tables, with benches by them. On the tables wooden cups and ewers filled with water.

At the right a fireplace: iron pot simmering on the embers. On its hearth a thorn broom, a bellows. On the mantelshelf a trencher, pewter plates and candlesticks, etc.

The rest of the room is quite bare.

The door in background opens on a road gray with dust, and a few bushes. The light of afternoon falls through the curtained windows, gradually deepening through twilight to night.

At the rise of the curtain Dame Decision is stooping mending the fire. The Little Pilgrim pushes the door in background and enters timidly.

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THE LITTLE PILGRIM.

Good dame, I pray you, may I rest me here?
A pilgrim, I!

DAME DECISION
(rising).

Enter, and be of cheer.

THE LITTLE PILGRIM
(sitting at table at right).

I thank you.

DAME DECISION.

Whither are you journeying?

THE LITTLE PILGRIM.

I go to seek the City of the King.
And here the road turns.

DAME DECISION.

Aye, for good or ill.
My name is Dame Decision. Sit you still
And rest, till other pilgrims hither wend.

THE LITTLE PILGRIM
(eagerly).

Think you among them I shall find a friend
To bear me company along the way?
Oh, counsel me, good Dame, I pray you.

DAME DECISION.

Nay,
Pilgrim, I may not. Who doth here abide
Must choose his own friends, his own way decide.
Only by trial is true wisdom bought.
Did I decide for you, 'twould count you nought.
My part is but to keep the fire alight,
The tables garnished, and the flagons bright,
And the hearth swept—for every wand'ring guest.

[*Fills cup with water and hands it to him.*

Drink deep. 'Tis from the Well of Peace and Rest!

THE LITTLE PILGRIM.

May any enter here and welcome find?

DAME DECISION

(looking out of casement).

Aye, for my inn is open as the wind
To all who come. My hearthstone ever burns
For every wayfarer who hither turns.

THE LITTLE PILGRIM.

Your casements shine as brightly as a star!

DAME DECISION.

The Casements of Perception, child, they are.
Ever I strive to keep them fair and clean
So that through each the world is clearly seen—
The radiant sunshine, and the wide blue sky—
The long road and its many passers-by;

For if the Casements dark and cloudy grow
Dark, too, will be the outside world they show!
They who would ever see the world aright
Should keep the Casements of Perception bright.

STEADFAST

(entering).

Good morrow, comrade!

THE LITTLE PILGRIM.

Will you sit by me,
Seeing that pilgrims at this inn we be?

STEADFAST

(clasping the hand that The Little Pilgrim extends to him).

Although I know you not, I like you well.
My name is Steadfast.

[*After The Little Pilgrim and Steadfast meet, Dame Decision exits left.*

THE LITTLE PILGRIM

(gazing at him).

So thine eyes do tell!

[*They sit at opposite sides of the table.*

To seek the City of the King, I go.

STEADFAST.

Then I will fare with you, come weal or woe,
And so will all my friends who now draw nigh,
Knowledge and Joyousness and Honesty.

THE LITTLE PILGRIM.

Lo! By the doorway I see some one stand.

STEADFAST.

'Tis Knowledge with a script and staff in hand.

KNOWLEDGE

(entering).

Pilgrim, much good I wish you.

THE LITTLE PILGRIM

(bowing).

Grammercy!
And will you tell us tales of land and sea
As on we journey? Give us counsel sage?

KNOWLEDGE

(crossing to table at left).

Yea, to the ending of your pilgrimage.

COURAGE

(entering).

A blithe good morrow to you, one and all!

KNOWLEDGE.

'Tis Master Courage!

STEADFAST.

Now if aught befall
We shall be valiant.

COURAGE

(to Pilgrim).

When you are dismayed
Take up this broadsword. It will be your aid.

[*All seat themselves at table, left.*

THE LITTLE PILGRIM.

Courage, I thank you.

[*Faint music heard off.*

STEADFAST.

Hist! Dost thou not hear
Sweet strains of music? Joyousness draws near.

JOYOUSNESS

(entering).

Comrades, a thousand greetings!

STEADFAST.

Now shall we
Set out upon our way right merrily
Since thou art with us.

JOYOUSNESS

(joining them).

It will be my part
To bring great gladness unto every heart.

[*They fill flagons, and take bread from their wallets. Enter Falsepride, who goes to*

table, right. A moment later Selfishness enters and goes to same.

THE LITTLE PILGRIM

(dazzled).

Look now who enters in a splendid dress!

JOYOUSNESS.

'Tis Falsepride, followed close by Selfishness.

THE LITTLE PILGRIM.

Will they not come? Are they not friends of thine?

JOYOUSNESS.

Nay, Pilgrim, they were never friends of mine,
And whoso chooseth with them to remain
Must say farewell to us and all our train.

[*Enter Boastfulness.*

See! Boastfulness now joins them.

THE LITTLE PILGRIM

(plainly interested in the newcomers).

With an air
More valiant than doth even Courage wear.

KNOWLEDGE

(gravely).

If you would spurn the false and choose the true
Judge not by what folk seem, but what they do!

[*The newcomers at the table laugh and talk in*

dumb show. They are presently joined by Faintheart.

STEADFAST

(to Pilgrim).

Now comes that trembling wight named Faint-of-Heart
Whose very shadow makes him shrink and start.

HONESTY

(without).

Wares ho! Wares ho!

THE LITTLE PILGRIM

(excited).

Dost thou not hear a shout?

COURAGE.

Mayhap some merchant man is there without.

HONESTY

(appearing in doorway).

Wares ho!

ALL

(rising).

A peddler!

HONESTY

(coming forward, center).

Honesty's my name,

[*Holds up gems richly set in gold.*

And these fair jewels, glancing like a flame,
Are Love and Kindliness.

ALL

(delighted, entranced at sparkle).

Ah!

HONESTY.

Who will buy?

[*General interest. They crowd round Honesty.*

SELFISHNESS

(shouldering forward).

Friends, give *me* room. *I* wish the gems to try!

HONESTY

(with a wise smile).

Nay, gently, Selfishness, release your hold,
For see, your touch doth tarnish all the gold!

[*Tosses gems to Joyousness.*

FALSEPRIDE

(taking looking-glass from pack).

I prithee, sell this mirror unto me.

HONESTY

(shaking his head).

It is the mirror of Humility.

You cannot purchase it, Falsepride, alas!
For you have looked too long in Self-Love's glass.

BOASTFULNESS

(sucking his finger with a cry).

Good lack!

HONESTY

(amused).

What! Boastfulness, hath felt the prick
Of Truth's sharp needle, reaching to your quick?

[*The vices withdraw to their former position near table, right, while Honesty does a thriving trade with the virtues, left, Pilgrim hesitates, center.*

FALSEPRIDE

(going to him, winningly).

Pilgrim, will you not join us?

THE LITTLE PILGRIM

(somewhat flattered).

Nay, Falsepride,
For I have sworn with Steadfast to abide.

BOASTFULNESS

(swaggering up).

And who is *he* that thou shouldst promise so?

FALSEPRIDE

(sneering).

Will you with peddlers and with strollers go?

(cajolingly)

You, who are wise and brave—

THE LITTLE PILGRIM

(drawn).

Her words are sweet!

FAINTHEART.

Tarry with us!

FALSEPRIDE.

Yea, stay, I do entreat.

THE LITTLE PILGRIM

(turning, sees his late comrades putting on their cloaks for departure).

What! Courage, will you go, and Knowledge, too?

COURAGE

(leaving with Knowledge).

Aye, Pilgrim, for our way we must pursue
To the King's City.

[*Exit Courage and Knowledge.*

THE LITTLE PILGRIM.

Joy, will *you* begone?

JOYOUSNESS.

Aye, for when Courage leads, I follow on
With Peddler Honesty.

[*Exit Joyousness and Honesty.*

STEADFAST

(pausing).

Bethink you, friend,
You said you would go with me to the end.

FALSEPRIDE

(plucking at Pilgrim's sleeve).

Nay, but you are too fine for such as they!

FAINTHEART

(over Pilgrim's shoulder).

Rough is the road they tread, and long the way!

STEADFAST

(sturdily).

But straight and sure.

BOASTFULNESS.

Heed not the tales they tell.

STEADFAST

(sorrowfully).

Then farewell, Pilgrim.

[*Exit Steadfast.*

THE LITTLE PILGRIM.

Steadfast, fare thee well!
Heavy my heart feels, now that he is sped.

[*Goes slowly to table at right and seats himself. Anger enters suddenly and lays fierce hands on Pilgrim's shoulders.*

ANGER.

Wilt thou usurp *my* place? The table's head?

THE LITTLE PILGRIM

(startled).

I knew not 'twas *thy* place to which I came!

ANGER

(loudly).

Peace, lest I smite thee! Anger is my name!

THE LITTLE PILGRIM

(trembling).

Alas, the friends I did but now forswear
Were kind and gentle, and their speech was fair!

FALSEPRIDE

(rising).

Come, comrades, we have supped and drunk our fill
Let us begone!

[*All rise, don cloaks, etc.*

FAINTHEART.

Tarry a little still.

THE LITTLE PILGRIM

(radiantly).

Now set we forth upon our journeying
At last, to seek the City of the King!

SELFISHNESS.

"The City of the King"? What words are these?
I take whatever path doth me most please.

FAINTHEART.

To me the easiest way doth seem the best.

THE LITTLE PILGRIM

(bewildered).

Will none of ye go with me on my quest?

(passionately)

Why, but ye promised the same road to take!

FALSEPRIDE.

Promises, Pilgrim, that were made to break.

THE LITTLE PILGRIM

(beseeching).

Faintheart——!

FAINTHEART.

Nay, Pilgrim, plead not thus with me.
I go with them. I dare not go with thee.

THE LITTLE PILGRIM

(still more urgently).

Boastfulness——!

BOASTFULNESS.

Nay, I *will* not!

THE LITTLE PILGRIM.

You did prate
Of bravery.

BOASTFULNESS.

Aye, but the hour grows late.
With darkling shadows all the way is sown.
Night comes.

THE LITTLE PILGRIM

(terrified).

You will not leave me here alone?

FALSEPRIDE

(sharply).

Yea, if you come not with us. Pilgrim, choose!

THE LITTLE PILGRIM

(to himself).

The dark . . . alone . . . I fear my way to lose!
What was it Courage said—"When sore dismayed
[*Moves towards table, left.*
Take up this broadsword—it will be your aid!"

ANGER.

Enough! Such dallying doth make me rage.

THE LITTLE PILGRIM

(wheeling suddenly, sword held high, stands center, eyes uplifted).

I fear thee not! I choose my Pilgrimage!

FALSEPRIDE

(in a low voice).

Let us be gone!

[*They vanish almost instantly.*

THE LITTLE PILGRIM

(turning and perceiving they have gone out door in background).

So swiftly have they left!
Of friend and foe alike I am bereft.
I'll call the inn-wife. *(raises voice)* Dame Decision! All
Is quiet and she does not heed my call.

(calls again)

Good Dame! 'Tis of no use. I must prepare
To rest me here, or on the way to fare.

[*Crosses to table right, and sits down.*

Oh, by my bitter folly now I know
That that which Knowledge said was surely so.
If one would choose between the false and true
Choose not by what folk seem, but what they do.
Knowledge and Courage and Steadfast were mine,
These I forsook for Falsepride's raiment fine,

For Faintheart's flattery, Selfishness' greed,
And they forsook me in my utmost need.
Oh, gentle Steadfast, thou who wert so true,
I lost my heart's best friend in losing you!

[*Bows head on arms.*

STEADFAST

(who has entered softly, steals up to him and lays hand on his shoulder).

Nay, did you think so far from you I'd wend,
I, who had promised you to be your friend?

THE LITTLE PILGRIM

(much moved).

Ye did return!

STEADFAST.

Aye, for my heart did ache
To leave you friendless.

THE LITTLE PILGRIM

(with shame).

I did you forsake,
And ye forgive it!

STEADFAST

(smiling).

'Tis a little thing
When comrades seek the City of the King.
Here comes the inn-wife.

[*Enter Dame Decision, left.*

Have you brought a light?

DAME DECISION

(giving lantern to Pilgrim).

The Lantern of Discernment, shining bright
To guide your footsteps.

THE LITTLE PILGRIM

(taking it).

Much I thank you, Dame.

DAME DECISION

(to Pilgrim).

Take up your staff. Fail not to tend the flame *(indicates lantern).*

[*The music of Joyousness is heard without.*

Now speed you forth, with comrades leal to dwell.

[*Exit Pilgrim and Steadfast. Dame Decision stands at door watching them.*

They take the path together. All is well!

CURTAIN

EPILOGUE

Spoken by Dame Decision

YE who have listened to our play,
Beheld the Pilgrim on his way
And seen, how by Discernment's light
He learned at length to choose the right,
Mock not his stumbling. Vanity
Hath beguiled stronger ones than he.
Pilgrims along the selfsame road
Are we, with wallet, staff, or load.
His pitfalls are our own. Let us beware
Selfish enticements, Falsepride's silken snare.
Thus, choose ye wisely at Decision's Inn
That in the end ye happiness may win.
Now, friends, good-night and pleasant dreams to ye,
And thanks for your full gentle courtesy.

COSTUMES

DAME DECISION: Blue-gray robe. White cap and Puritan kerchief.

PILGRIM: Trunk hose and suit of russet, slashed with pale blue. Carries a staff. The suits of all the Pilgrims are after the same manner of the pictures in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress."

STEADFAST: Old rose suit and hose.

KNOWLEDGE: Deep purple robe falling in folds like an abbess's. Purple cloak.

COURAGE: Pale gray suit and hose. Breastplate and helmet of silver: scarlet plume in helmet. Sword of tempered steel at waist.

JOYOUSNESS: White robe spangled in gold. Pale green cloak.

FALSEPRIDE: Brocaded robe of many colors. Much jewelry. Rose colored cloak.

SELFISHNESS: Dress of black. Black cloak. Girdle of dark green.

BOASTFULNESS: Dull green suit and hose, slashed with black. Brass helmet and breastplate.

FAINTHEART: Suit and hose half of one color and half of another—preferably pale blue and black.

ANGER: Scarlet suit, and scarlet hose.

HONESTY: Brown suit slashed with white. Brown hose. Peddler's pack.

A PAGEANT OF HOURS

CHARACTERS

THE CHILD
THE CHILD'S ATTENDANT
FIRST HOUR (Dawn)
SECOND HOUR (Sunrise)
THIRD HOUR
FOURTH HOUR
FIFTH HOUR
} Morning Hours
SIXTH HOUR (Noon)
SEVENTH HOUR
EIGHTH HOUR
NINTH HOUR
} Afternoon Hours
TENTH HOUR (Sunset)
ELEVENTH HOUR (Twilight)
TWELFTH HOUR (Night)

A PAGEANT OF HOURS

(For Children)

TIME: *Early June or late May.*

SCENE: *A greensward bound by trees and flowers. In the left background a half-ruined, moss-grown shrine on which stands an hour-glass. The pageant begins by the First Hour in gray and rosy robes entering from the right just as the Child breaks through from the background, wondering and hesitating. They face each other for a moment in startled silence, and after this throughout all the pageant the Child stands by the shrine, looking with shy wonder at the Hours as they come and go. The First Hour coming forward speaks.*

FIRST HOUR

(winningly).

Little mortal, who art thou,
With thy dreams still on thy brow?
Hast thou left thy sleep to find
Secrets of the morning wind?

THE CHILD.

While 'twas dark I came awake—
Gray with vapor was the lake,

All the world lay hushed and still,
Dark the garden and the hill.
While the flowers about me slept
Through the dewy grass I crept,
Not a single wing went by—
Yet I came, I know not why,
For this place so cool and green
Ne'er before my eyes have seen.

First Hour.

Hidden well by trees and flowers
'Tis the Garden of the Hours!
Stay, and thou shalt see them pass
Here before thee o'er the grass.
Hours of blue and gold they be,
Each one bringing gifts to thee.
Listen well and thou shalt know
As the fleet hours come and go
How to prize the gifts they bear,
For they bring thee all things fair.
I am Dawn. To thee I bring
Drowsy bird notes, brush of wing,
Wind that shivers through the trees
And a thousand mysteries—
Things half-murmured by the brooks,
Deeper than the lore of books,
Whiter than the morning star
Fading where my banners are.
Breaking East on land and sea—
These the gifts I bring to thee!

[*Exit First Hour, left. The Child stands by ruined shrine in background as the other Hours defile before it. As soon as one Hour exits another Hour appears upon the scene. As the First Hour goes, the Second Hour enters, clad in rosy robes.*

SECOND HOUR

The end of the dark—the song of the lark—
These do I bring thee! The sun's gold I fling thee!
I slip through each portal, I glint in thine eyes
Crying " Up, little mortal, the day's in the skies,
And there's much to be done ere the setting of sun,
So hasten! O, hasten! How swift the hours run!"
I bring thee the perfumes of wood and of field,
All the opening flowers yield,
And warm scents from each furrow
Where shy creatures burrow,
All the stir and the whir of a million of wings,
All the joy sunrise brings.
The gossamer laces that lie at thy feet,
The hunger that sweetens the bread that ye eat
Making its savor e'en fit for a king—
These are the gifts that I hasten to bring.

[*Exit Second Hour.*

THIRD HOUR

(entering, robed in cloud-white with touches of gold).

Heed me! I am swift to pass
As a shadow o'er the grass.

All my moments cherish well,
Each one holds a golden spell.
I, the task hour, bring to thee
Golden Opportunity.

[*Exit Third Hour.*

FOURTH HOUR

(entering, clad in cloud-white and sky blue).

Soft I come and soft I go,
Ere I pass, O mortal, know
That I give thee power to look
Wisely in thy lesson book.
Time gone by and Time to be,
Heed the gift I bring to thee!

[*Exit Fourth Hour.*

FIFTH HOUR

(entering, clad in robes of cloud-white with draperies of deep sky).

Me behold, a working hour,
Full of promise and of power,
Let me not slip idle by,
For I bring thee guerdon high.
Building well ye build with me
For the days that are to be.

[*Exit Fifth Hour.*

NOON

(entering with clash of cymbals, and wearing a robe of cloth of gold).

I am Noon!
I bring the tune

Of a thousand droning bees
Carried faintly by the breeze,
Sweet and drowsy harmonies,
And the endless croon and rune
Of the myriad things that pass
Through the forests of the grass—
Till my heat doth hush and blur
All the murmur and the stir;
And the bird with tawny throat
Pauses on a half-sung note.
Would you know what wisdom is
Hearken to my silences.
Power to listen and to see—
These the gifts I bring to thee.
Hill and meadow, wood and dune
Hold my secrets. I am Noon!

[*Exit Noon with another clap of cymbals.*

SEVENTH HOUR

(entering, clad in robe of deepest sky blue).

I am the first of the afternoon hours,
Dappled with sunshine and scented with flowers.
Learn with me, turn with me page after page:
Endless my bounty and splendid my wage.

[*Exit Seventh Hour.*

EIGHTH HOUR

(entering, clad in robes of pale sky blue and white).

Long are my moments, yet golden each one,
Sweet as the tinkle of slow brooks they run.

Measure me, treasure me, let me not go
Ere I have yielded thee all thou shouldst know!

[*Exit Eighth Hour.*

NINTH HOUR

(entering, robed in blue, so pale that it is almost white).

Dust of the roadway, fragrance of clover,
Come I to tell thee task hours are over.
Stray with me, play with me, shadow and sun
Are thine for the asking! Task hours are done!

[*Exit Ninth Hour.*

TENTH HOUR

(entering, violet robed, with touches of gold).

I bring the robin's sunset note—
Echoes that through the clear air float,
The homing sounds of beast and bird,
Of shy brown wren and lowing herd;
While in the Western sky I set
Like a flaming parapet
Clouds of rose and violet.
Gaze at them and they shall seem
Like wondrous countries of a dream.
Golden crags and boulders piled
By some sea-coast strange and wild,
Or gardens rosy with new flowers,
Or cities with a hundred towers,
Or only flocks with fleece of gold
Crossing to their azure fold.

Power to fashion dreamily
Is the gift I bring to thee.

[*Exit Tenth Hour. Eleventh Hour enters very slow and stately, with finger on lip, wearing trailing gray robe and silver sandals.*

ELEVENTH HOUR.

Soft, with finger on my lip,
Through sunset's closing gate I slip,
 Mystic, slow.
From the marshes comes a chir,
And from night bird's nests a stir
 As I go,
And my trailing garments fold
Like a silvery mist is rolled,
 Faint and gray;
And I close the starry eyes
Of each flower that near me lies
 As I stray.
Blurring shadows, falling dew,
Scents that daylight never knew . . .
 Fern and grass . . .
Hushèd song and folded wing!
Take the *wonder* that I bring
 Ere I pass.

[*Exit Eleventh Hour. The Twelfth Hour enters with round golden moon held high in hand. The Child drowses by the ruined shrine.*

TWELFTH HOUR

(robed in black with touches of gold).

I, the night hour, solemn, deep,
Bring to thee the gift of sleep,
And if well thy hours were spent,
To that gift I add content,
And the fairest dreams there are,
Each one shining as a star!
While within the sky above
High I set my lamp of love *(raises moon)*
There to shine till raise of sun,
Till thy dream-voyage be done.
Little mortal rest thee well,
Thou hast learned the wondrous spell
That the hours do weave for thee
Coming, going, endlessly.
Learned what all their moments make,
Learned their gifts to prize and take.
Disdain us and we master thee,
Command us and thy slaves we be.
Dream, then, for naught shall come nigh,
Dream till dawn be in the sky!
I, the night hour, solemn, deep,
Give to thee the gift of sleep.

[*Child drowses. Twelfth Hour with moon held high stands guard at left. The Child's Attendant enters, sees Child, and runs to the place where Child is drowsing, without ever once seeing the Twelfth Hour who stands silent.*

THE CHILD'S ATTENDANT

(tenderly stern).

Where hast thou been? All day I sought for thee.
Yet when I called thou didst not answer me.

THE CHILD

(rising and leaning against her very sleepily as they go to exit, left).

I heard thee not.

THE CHILD'S ATTENDANT.

I searched the woods, the bowers,
The fields,—while thou——

THE CHILD

(dreamily, with face uplifted).

I learned to know—the Hours!

[*The Child and the Child's Attendant exit left, slowly, while the Twelfth Hour passes after their exit to the right. The stage is thus left empty and the play ends.*

COSTUMES

ALL the costumes are Grecian, soft and flowing. As all the children taking part in the pageant are girls their robes are along the lines of small goddesses.

THE CHILD: Little Greek robe of white, sandals, chaplet of green leaves on head.

THE CHILD'S ATTENDANT: Greek robe of pale green. Green bands across hair.

THE FIRST HOUR (Dawn): Pale gray robe over robe of faint pink. Pink sandals.

SECOND HOUR (Sunrise): Robe of deepest pink, with draperies of pink gauze. Golden fillet on hair.

THIRD HOUR: Pure cloud white robe, with draperies of gold tissue.

FOURTH HOUR: White robe with draperies of sky blue.

FIFTH HOUR: White robe with trailing draperies of deep sky blue.

SIXTH HOUR (Noon): Robe of cloth of gold (or of sunlight yellow) golden sandals, and golden fillet across hair. Carries brass cymbals in hand.

SEVENTH HOUR: Robe of deepest sky blue.

EIGHTH HOUR: Robe of paler sky blue with draperies of white gauze, cloud-like.

NINTH HOUR: Robe of very pale blue—almost white.

White gauze faintly spangled with gold drifting about the robe like a cloud fleece. Wreath of white clover on hair.

TENTH HOUR: Violet robe. Draperies of gold tissue —the colors of sunset.

ELEVENTH HOUR (Twilight): Deep gray robe, longer and more trailing than any of the others. Silver sandals. Gray gauze draperies with touches of silver glinting through.

TWELFTH HOUR (Night): Black robe spangled with silver and dull gold. Black sandals. Fillet of stars. Carries large round golden disk to represent the full moon.

The pageant should be done in a stately fashion, the small figures moving with measured step across the grass. With a stage covered with green baize and potted plants it is perfectly possible to give the play an indoor production. For a more elaborate production indoors colored lights may be used—rosy for the dawn, strong golden light for noon, violet for the dusk, etc., down to the darkness and pale moonlight of the ending. For schoolroom use the play may be given either with the fanciful costumes, or with everyday ones. If the former way is desired the robes can be easily and simply fashioned of cheesecloth; or, lacking these, to the dress of everyday may be added crown and stars for each of the Hours with the symbolical colors—gold, silver, blue, white, gray, etc.

ON CHRISTMAS EVE

CHARACTERS

THE LITTLE GIRL
WENDY
CRUSOE
ALICE
HANSEL
GRETEL
THE TRAVELER FROM BAGDAD
THE BOY FROM THE BACK OF THE NORTH WIND
THE HUSH-A-BYE LADY
THE LITTLE GIRL'S MOTHER
SANTA CLAUS

DRAMATIC DIRECTIONS

THE window which the play calls for can be made by building a frame of laths 3x3, and stretching across it dark brown cambric. Cut a square in the cambric the size of a window. Across the upper part of this fasten a curtain on a draw string—fixed so it can be drawn aside. On the side of the window which the audience does not see place a chair on which Wendy can stand. Wendy can then step from one to the other through the window quite easily, and give the effect of flying. If this cannot be done, Wendy can, of course, knock at the door, and enter as the other characters do. The fireplace should be made of dry-goods boxes as described in the preceding plays, and give ample space for the entrance of Santa Claus. The Little Girl wears her usual everyday clothes. Directions for more elaborate costumes follow; but if little trouble and schoolroom simplicity is desired they can be gotten up most easily. The boy who plays Crusoe can borrow fur scarfs and have them hanging about his shoulders and waist. Out of brown cambric he can make such a belt and pouch pocket as Crusoe wore. Alice should wear a dainty little white Swiss apron, and a pretty cloak. Gretel should have a cap and apron to which is basted a deep red border. Hansel

a red cap and red muffler. Bagdad Traveler should wear a turban of some gay stuff wound round his head. Let him borrow a Kimona, and wear it as a flowing East Indian robe—only be sure that it is not a Japanese Kimona—it should be of a solid color, or at least of some pattern that does not too much suggest the flowery kingdom. Let him borrow, too, if possible, a pair of Turkish slippers with turned up toes. The boy from the Back of the North Wind should wear his overcoat, fur cap, and ear muffs. The Hush-A-Bye Lady a crown of tissue paper or artificial poppies, and a white drapery of cheese-cloth or even a sheet—so it has flowing lines. For Santa a bath robe with a cord, plumply stuffed out, and a ruddy mask with its white beard. A red cap on head. Directions for a more elaborate production follow.

ON CHRISTMAS EVE

The scene is a bare living room with a few chairs. At the left a fireplace with scant embers glowing in it. Above it a shelf with a couple of tin candlesticks containing unlighted candles. From the mantelshelf hangs a stocking. In the background, towards the left, a window curtained in cheap flowered cambric. Through it is caught a glimpse of a crisp and snowy night outside.

In the right background a door opening on the outside.

Against the right wall a plain deal table.

Near the center of the room a battered lounge with an old shawl neatly folded and lying across its foot.

At the rise of the curtain the Little Girl is lying on the floor near the hearthstone, her head propped on her hand, a book spread out before her. After a second she closes the book and rubs her eyes.

THE LITTLE GIRL.

The fire's growing so dim I can't see to read any longer, and Mother won't be home for hours yet. I daren't light the candles for candles cost so much and there's no money to pay for them; so all I can do is to sit by the fire and think. *(Wind wails without.)*

There's the wind, sighing and singing to keep me company on Christmas Eve. When it blows like that it always seems as if it had something it wanted to tell me about far off countries that I've never seen, about streets with white palaces, like the Arabian Nights, and islands with coral shores, and palm trees thick as feather dusters. *(Dreamily.)* And then—the wonderful people—Crusoe and Aladdin and the Snow Queen and Peter Pan and Wendy—*Especially* Wendy! I've loved them for so long, and thought about them so much—Oh, how I wish that I might see them! *(Vehemently.)* Oh, how I *wish* that they were real, and that they would come to me in any way they could! *(A rasping sound at the window without.)* Why, what's that? *(Listens.)* Nothing! Only the wind playing tricks in the chimney. *(Another rasp.)* That's more than the wind. That's some one trying to get in. *(Timidly.)* I—I believe I'm half afraid—and yet—and yet—— *(Courageously.)* How silly of me! It may be only a dead branch tapping at the pane, or a bit of icicle that has snapped and fallen. *(Goes to window.)* Of course I'll open it and see! *(She stands by window. Business of opening it. A great gust of wind, and Wendy tumbles over the sill, breathless, with her broom in her hand.)*

THE LITTLE GIRL

(half amazed, half rapturous).

W-h-y—it's some one flying on a broomstick! Oh, my wish! It *has* come true! It *has* come true!

WENDY

(pausing to shake off snow).

Of course it's come true! But I thought I should never make you hear me. I don't know what I should have done, if you hadn't opened the window. You see, its such a blustery night that for a moment I completely lost my bearings. I've just been to take a Christmas dinner to Peter Pan, and see that he has a snug fire built in his little house in the tree tops.

THE LITTLE GIRL.

Peter Pan! Why, you must be Wendy! Oh, Wendy, I was just wishing you were real.

WENDY

(stoutly).

Real! Why, of course I'm real! I come from the Country of Imagination, and that's the realest place there is, anywhere! You know that the things you sometimes think unreal are often the realest things there are.

THE LITTLE GIRL.

But—Wendy—tell me. How did you know I wanted you?

WENDY

(matter-of-factly).

Because I met a wish flying through the air.

THE LITTLE GIRL

(utterly dumfounded).

A wish—*flying through the air!*

WENDY.

Why, yes. Dear me, haven't you ever *heard,* haven't you ever *learned* that wishes are the most wonderful messengers there are? And that if you wish for a thing long enough and hard enough it comes true at last! That is, if you work for it, too!

THE LITTLE GIRL

(incredulously).

But I haven't worked for this!

WENDY.

Oh, yes, you have. In hundreds and hundreds of ways. You had to learn to read before you could get acquainted with us at all—and you tried very hard to become acquainted with us, didn't you! And then you sent a wish. Oh, it's a wonderful thing to see the wishes flying!

THE LITTLE GIRL

(evincing great interest).

Do they all look alike?

WENDY.

Good gracious, no! They're as different as people are. Ugly wishes are dark, like bats; but beautiful

wishes are like birds, or flying flowers, or stars on their way through the dark.

THE LITTLE GIRL.

But the way is so long—I should think they'd get broken or lost!

WENDY.

Oh, no. They are the strongest things there are. At least, some of them. Weak and wobbly wishes never go far. They just flutter and fall and drop to the ground, and I never count them as truly wishes at all. *(Takes up her broom.)*

THE LITTLE GIRL

(alarmed).

Dear Wendy—you're not going? I wanted you so much to stay. It's Christmas Eve and I'm so lonely!

WENDY

(incredulously).

Lonely! On Christmas Eve!

THE LITTLE GIRL.

You see my mother hasn't come home from work yet, and I'm waiting for her.

WENDY.

What time does she generally arrive?

THE LITTLE GIRL.

Six o'clock week days, but on holidays not till eleven.

WENDY

(slowly).

Eleven! *(Suddenly brightening.)* Why, that would give us plenty of time!

THE LITTLE GIRL.

Time?

WENDY.

For a party!

[*Wendy crosses to fire and puts a little more coal on; warms her hands a moment, and then begins to fasten most securely her hood and flying cape, meantime carrying on an animated conversation with the Little Girl.*

THE LITTLE GIRL

(bewildered).

A party?

WENDY.

Don't you know that people always have parties on Christmas Eve?

THE LITTLE GIRL

(wistfully).

I've never had one. But perhaps that's because I don't know any people to invite. Yet even if I did there's nothing here to eat but bread and potatoes.

WENDY

(indignantly).

Eat! It's only stupid people who go to parties to eat. And as for guests—there are those who are always ready to make happy the hours of the very loneliest of children. What would you say to Robinson Crusoe and Alice-in-Wonderland and——

THE LITTLE GIRL.

Oh, *Wendy!*

WENDY

(nodding).

I thought you'd only forgotten them! Now sit down in that chair and wait for me till I come back. *(Takes up broom.)* You can't imagine what convenient things broomsticks are once you've learned to fly. *(Goes to window.)*

THE LITTLE GIRL

(much mystified).

But where are you going?

WENDY

(laughingly, as she climbs out).

To deliver the invitations!

[*Exit Wendy.*

THE LITTLE GIRL.

There she goes, flying over the tree-tops! Oh, I wonder if it's all a dream, or if I'm really to have a

party—if I'm really to see Robinson Crusoe and—*(A knock on the outside door.)* What's that? *(Another knock.)* It surely can't be Wendy back again! *(Runs to door and opens it. Alice appears upon threshold.)* Why, Alice!

ALICE

(entering).

I was just running home from Wonderland when I met Wendy, and she directed me right to your door. The March Hare and the Hatter wanted to come, too, but I wouldn't let them. They always talk so much that no one else can get a word in edgewise.

THE LITTLE GIRL.

Won't you sit by the fire? I wish it was burning brighter.

ALICE

(seating herself comfortably).

Oh, I like it just as it is. It looks as it sometimes does in our grate at home. *(With a sigh of content.)* I'm very fond of the firelight country.

THE LITTLE GIRL

(puzzled).

The Firelight Country——

ALICE.

Yes. Don't you know? But perhaps you've never looked at a fire that way. When you've learned to

it's just like fairyland! There are black, black dungeons and golden lakes and ruby towers and trees with jewels hanging thick as fruit. Ah, one doesn't have to travel to see wonders. One can have them here at home.

[*A knock at the outer door.*

THE LITTLE GIRL

(delightedly).

That must be the rest of the party beginning to come.

ALICE.

I think it's Robinson Crusoe. I passed him on the way.

THE LITTLE GIRL

(opening door).

Good evening, Mr. Crusoe!

CRUSOE

(entering, with a parrot in a cage).

Good evening, my dear little girl! Good evening, Miss Alice. Wendy says that you are expecting me.

ALICE

(rising).

Take this chair by the fire, Mr. Crusoe. How is your man Friday?

CRUSOE.

Friday is in excellent health, I thank you, Miss

Alice! He's still on the island, but I'm bringing the parrot with me. *(Puts parrot on table, right, and then goes to seat by fire. Alice and the Little Girl join him.)*

THE LITTLE GIRL.

Please, Mr. Crusoe, won't you tell us a story? I'd love to hear some more of your adventures.

CRUSOE.

Adventures? Bless my heart! Well, let me see. Once upon a time . . . *(A knock on the door.)* Once upon a time when I . . . *(A louder knock.)*

THE LITTLE GIRL

(politely).

I believe that's another knock on the door!

ALICE.

I'll open it.

THE LITTLE GIRL.

Mercy, what a blast of cold air!

ALICE.

I don't wonder. You see it's the Boy from the back of the North Wind! *(He enters.)*

THE LITTLE GIRL.

What a long, long way you must have blown!

THE BOY

(breathlessly).

Wait just a minute! Don't close the door! There's a tall dark man coming, wearing the strangest clothes.

THE LITTLE GIRL

(estatically, after looking out the door).

It's the Traveler from Bagdad!

[*The Traveler from Bagdad enters and salaams deeply a great number of times. The Little Girl, not to be outdone by him in manners, follows his example, bowing till she is quite out of breath. He carries with him a huge roll of carpet.*

THE LITTLE GIRL

(aside to Alice, as the Traveler ceases his salaams).

There! He's stopped at last! It must be dreadfully tiring to meet with friends in Bagdad.

THE BAGDAD TRAVELER

(with another salaam).

Blessings be upon this house from the first hour of the day until the twelfth.

THE LITTLE GIRL

(indicating carpet).

Is that——

THE BAGDAD TRAVELER.

That's the magic carpet on which I travel. And as I was floating over the roofs of Europe what should I see but a boy and girl trudging along hand in hand. At first I thought they might be the children of Sinbad the Sailor—Sinbad's children are great rovers, you know—they take after their father; but it turned out they were two little folk named Hansel and Gretel, so I asked them to come with me, and here they are! *(Unrolls his magic carpet, and Hansel and Gretel roll out, chubby and merry looking.)*

THE LITTLE GIRL

(gazing at them).

What a darling little cap! And what cunning little shoes!

HANSEL.

At Christmas time Kriss Kringell puts presents in our shoes instead of in our stockings!

GRETEL.

Will you not have some of my candy? It is from the Witch's house that we found in the wood. Ach! It was such a house! All candy! Hansel, he is still eating a piece of the door and this is a piece of the roof!

[*The various groups talk and gesticulate in pantomime: Hansel and Gretel and the Little Girl, center; Alice and the Boy by the table.*

CRUSOE

(to the Bagdad Traveler).

I am glad, sir, to meet such a distinguished fellow traveler. What is the latest news from Aladdin and the Caliph? *(Sound of something brushing against the window.)*

THE LITTLE GIRL

(eagerly).

That's Wendy back again! *(Opens the window as before and Wendy enters.)*

WENDY.

Peter Pan sent regrets. He was giving a party to the fairies and couldn't come. Tinker Bell wouldn't let him.

THE LITTLE GIRL.

I'm sorry about Peter, but O Wendy, it's such a *beautiful* party, and I'm having such a *splendid* time! *(Turns and perceives the Rock-a-Bye Lady, who has entered unobserved.)* Look! there's another guest, Wendy, and I didn't even hear her when she entered. She slipped in as quietly as a snowflake. *(Going forward, half-shyly.)* You're very beautiful, and I'm glad you've come to my party, but I don't believe I know who you are.

THE HUSH-A-BYE LADY

(quite tenderly).

Don't you, my sweet? Ah, you *should* know, for

I've been coming to you every night for years and years; summer and winter, week days and holidays. *(As she speaks she leads the Little Girl to the shabby sofa and seats herself beside her.)*

THE LITTLE GIRL

(drowsily, her head against the Lady's shoulder).

About—what—time—do—you—usually—come?

THE HUSH-A-BYE LADY

(lullingly).

I come when the night wind wakes, and when the little stars are lit like candles all across the sky. I come when the flickering, creeping shadows say, "Day is over, Day is over. Time for weary heads to rest."

[*The Little Girl nods as the Lady speaks, and finally sleeps. The Lady rises gently, letting the Little Girl lie full length on the sofa, and covers her with the worn shawl. Then she stands a moment, face uplifted, and finger on lip. All listen. Faint and then nearer grow the bells of Santa Claus. A rattling of hoofs overhead. Ruddy and beaming he comes down the chimney.*

SANTA CLAUS.

Oho! What is this I see? Nobody warned me of any party! Merry Christmas, everybody. The season's greetings to you, Mr. Crusoe. *(Sees the Little Girl fast asleep.)* Fast asleep, is she?

WENDY

(anxiously).

Yes, but there's her stocking.

SANTA CLAUS

(chuckling with suppressed mirth).

Did you think I'd forget that? *(He starts to fill stocking and then pauses. Beckons.)* Come here, Wendy! *(He whispers to Wendy. Her face shows dawn of rapturous idea.)*

WENDY.

He says we must bring her a Christmas tree.

SANTA CLAUS.

Where's the Boy from the back of the North Wind? *(Boy comes forward.)* He's the one to fetch the tree. He knows all about the pines and where the Christmas firs grow, don't you?

THE BOY.

Yes, sir.

SANTA CLAUS.

Then off with you!

WENDY

(beaming and clasping her hands).

Oh, Santa!

SANTA CLAUS

(with upraised finger).

S-sh!

THE HUSH-A-BYE LADY

(smiling).

No fear of waking her. I've put her too soundly asleep for that.

SANTA CLAUS

(his eyes twinkling as he fills stocking).

Madam, I owe you a debt of gratitude. You and I have been working in unison these many years, and it's very seldom that you fail me.

THE BOY

(entering with tree, assisted by Crusoe and Traveler).

Here it is, Santa. *(They stand it over by the fireplace.)*

SANTA CLAUS.

Bless my soul! It's a fine tree! Now, what shall we trim it with? For I've already filled her stocking, and you know, if I rob my pack it won't be fair to the other boys and girls.

CRUSOE

(delving into his pockets).

Here, sir, are some nuts and dates from my Desert Island.

HANSEL.

And here is more candy from the candy house we found in the wood. *(Santa Claus takes gifts and trims tree.)*

GRETEL

(eagerly).

You must take my candy, too.

THE BAGDAD TRAVELER

(taking off various chains and trinkets with which his costume and turban are adorned).

These will remind her of the Arabian Nights.

ALICE

(taking off her quaint little Lewis Carrol apron).

I am afraid all I can give is this apron. I'm *so* sorry, for aprons aren't very interesting. But in the pocket there's a little cake—a frosted cake from the March Hare's tea party.

THE BOY.

And as nothing but ice grows at the back of the North Wind, I'll have to contribute frost work.

[*Gives white cotton batting sprinkled with glittering dust.*

WENDY.

Here are some candles I was taking to Peter Pan. He won't miss them in the least.

THE BOY.

And here's a taper to light them with.

SANTA CLAUS

(surprised).

A taper?

THE BOY.

It's just a flame from one of the Northern Lights—I always have it with me.

THE HUSH-A-BYE LADY

(unfastening flowers from her girdle).

And here are some scarlet poppies, that will look well next the green, and a star or two that fell from the sky last summer. I see so many falling stars in my journeying from dusk till dawn, and I always catch them and use them for jewels in my hair.

SANTA CLAUS

(plainly puzzled).

What will we put on the top of the tree?

THE HUSH-A-BYE LADY.

What would you say to a shimmering, shining dream?

SANTA CLAUS.

(delighted).

The very thing!

WENDY.

Now all's complete, I must be flying home again.

[*Exit through window as formerly. General bustle of departure.*

ALICE.

The Duchess will be expecting me by this time, and I must hurry, for the Queen will be there too, and if I'm late I'll be sure to hear a voice crying: "Off with her head! Off with her head!"

[*Exit Alice.*

CRUSOE.

Well, my man Friday will be getting anxious. Come, Polly.

[*Picks up cage and exits.*

THE HUSH-A-BYE LADY

(speaking softly as she leans over the Little Girl).

Good-night, dear child, and a happy waking. May all the dreams you meet on Rock-a-Bye-Street be full of peace and joy.

[*Exit Lady.*

THE BAGDAD TRAVELER.

Come, Hansel. Come, Gretel. Remember you are to ride on my carpet.

HANSEL AND GRETEL

(pausing at door).

Good-night, Santa, and a Merry Christmas!

SANTA CLAUS.

Good-night! Good-night! Merry Christmas, every one. *(To Boy.)* Well, young man, since we both live in the polar region our ways lie in the same direction. How would you like to come with me and drive the reindeer?

THE BOY

(delightedly).

I'd like it better than anything!

SANTA CLAUS.

Up you go, then, up you go! *(Pushes boy up chimney. Seizes another toy from his pack and lays it beside the Little Girl who still soundly slumbers.)* Sleep well, dream deep, and wake to a Merry Christmas morning!

[*Santa Claus goes up the chimney. There is heard again the stamping of hoofs and the jingling of bells growing fainter and fainter. They cease altogether. Silence. A pause. Steps are heard without. The Little Girl's mother opens the door wearily, closes it behind her, and puts down her bundle. Then stares, rubs her eyes, and stares again, transfixed by what she sees. The Little Girl sleeps on. Tableau.*

CURTAIN

COSTUMES

THE LITTLE GIRL: Dark blue woolen dress, clean but worn.

WENDY: Brown dress. White lace collar. Brown cloak. Carries large "Witch" broom.

CRUSOE: Tall fur hat. Suit made of a combination of fur and leather; with leather girdle and knives stuck in it. Goat skin pocket attached to girdle. Gun in hand.

ALICE: Prim little short dress of white. Dainty white apron with tiny pockets and edging of lace. Wears a pale blue woolen cloak, hooded, which she takes off on entering.

GRETEL: Dark green skirt. Deep girdle of same laced over a white bodice. Cream colored apron bordered with red and green. Flaring white peasant cap. Dark green cape that she removes on entering. Red mittens. Wooden shoes. If these are not procurable a good way to imitate them is to have a pair cut and shaped from the heaviest wrapping paper, and then pasted over an old pair of slippers.

HANSEL: Dark knee breeches. Bright shirt and over this a little tight-fitting black velvet jacket snugly buttoned up the front. Black cap with laps over the ears. Green mittens. Wooden shoes. Both Hansel and Gretel wear very gay stockings.

BAGDAD TRAVELER: Yellow satin suit with very full Turkish breeches. Red and green silken sash. A great number of neck chains and immense jewels. Yellow stockings and yellow turned-up Turkish slippers, richly embroidered with gold. Blue and white turban. His face should be a dark yellowish brown and he should have a black mustache curling up at the ends.

THE BOY FROM THE BACK OF THE NORTH WIND: Esquimaux suit dusted with silver snow powder.

THE HUSH-A-BYE LADY: Long trailing white robe bordered with scarlet poppies on bands of silver. Silver stars and white and scarlet poppies worn on her flowing hair as a crown. Over her dress she wears a long soft white wrap trimmed with swansdown.

THE LITTLE GIRL'S MOTHER: Plain gray woolen working dress. Dark jacket, neat but worn. Shawl over her head.

THE ELF CHILD

CHARACTERS

HEATHER BELL, an elf
THE HERB GATHERER
FIRST VILLAGE CHILD
SECOND VILLAGE CHILD
CHORUS OF SIX OR MORE VILLAGE CHILDREN

DRAMATIC DIRECTIONS

THE play can be given either out of doors or indoors. If indoors, try to bring to it as much of the outdoor spirit as possible. Teach the children a quaint march figure if there is not room for them to dance. Build the Herb Gatherer's hut of canvas and fasten to it twigs and leaves and patches of green cambric. A little door of white cardboard painted with faint brown streaks to represent birch bark, and having greenish and brownish markings of a deeper tone to give the effect of moss and weather-staining. Use a schoolroom bench if a weather-darkened one is not to be had. A number of plants should be placed about right, left, and in background. There should be, if possible, a green floor covering. If the costumes later designated are too difficult, have prettily colored tissue paper caps for the peasant boys, and aprons with gay borders for the peasant girls. Heather Bell should wear a pair of purplish wings made of tinted cardboard, and the Herb Gatherer a dark dress and hood, with an apron to which are fastened red and green cabalistic signs so as to make a border.

At the indoor production of the play one of the village children should speak the following prologue:

PROLOGUE

Listen all ye who come to stay
And witness here our elfin play!
Think that you see, from left to right,
A woodland, sun-kissed, dappled, bright;
That overhead green branches meet,
And that midst grass and frond-fern sweet
Grow flowers with juice medicinal,
And herbs possessed of healing spell.
While, hid by oak and pointed fir,
The house of the Herb Gatherer
Peeps at the passers in the wood—
At peasant child or dame with hood.
Imagine that it is the close
Of a long summer's day. The rose
Begins to fold her soft leaves up,
The bee forsakes the lily's cup;
And village children homeward turn
Ere candlelight begins to burn.
Imagine, therefore, such a scene
Set deep within a forest green,
Let woodland fancies hold you thrall.
And grant your patience through it all.

THE ELF CHILD

The scene is a forest. Trees right and left, with curious herbs and flowers growing beneath them. In the background the Herb Gatherer's hut, very tiny and weather-stained, with moss on its sloping eaves, and grass growing up to its very door sill as if the forest claimed it for its own. Near this an old bench, so gray-green with lichens that it looks like part and parcel of its surroundings. The time is on a mid-summer eve at the edge of twilight. The village children, girls with short skirts and peasant bodices, and boys in quaint suits and caps, pass laden with flowers, and carrying gay baskets heaped with wild fruits, and piles of fagots. They go from right to left across the stage, their final exit being left.

At the right, half-hidden by tree branches, little Heather Bell watches them wistfully. All of Heather Bell's movements are light and fantastic, differing greatly in their elfishness from those of the village children.

CHORUS OF CHILDREN.

Gentle comrades, come away!
Closes now the long bright day.
On our hearths the fagots burn,
Back from the forest paths we turn.

O the touch of mother lips,
O the arm that round us slips!
We shall shut the darkness out,
And the shadows round about.
Twilight falls, yet from afar
In each doorway like a star
Shine the beacon lights of Home
Telling us no more to roam.

[*Exit Children. Heather Bell, who has emerged from behind the trees at the word "Home," darts after them with pleading, outstretched arms.*

HEATHER BELL.

The lights of Home—Oh, by those lights the lamps of fairyland seem cold and dim! Stay, let me go with you! *(Sorrowfully.)* They do not heed! They do not hear! They do not even see me!

CHORUS OF CHILDREN

(in distance).

Like a welcome when we roam
Shine the beacon lights of home!

HEATHER BELL.

Nay, they are gone, and there is naught left but the echo! And here am I alone in the wood! My elf comrades would laugh at me could they see how fruitless hath been my journey. 'Tis the every edge of the forest, and nought do I see but trees and ferns and—

(Catches sight of Herb Gatherer's hut.) Stay, there's a little house within the trees! Nay, as I live, 'tis the house of the wise old woman the village folk call the Herb Gatherer. They say that her skill in simples hath made her more than human wise. And more than elfin wise, it may be, for those who live in the forest learn to see far off. If I did but tap on the door. *(Goes up to the house.)* There's some one stirring within! I can hear a footstep! Oh, if I knocked, would she hear me? If she opened the door would she speak to me? I will try! *(Knocks gently at door.)*

[*The Herb Gatherer opens the door and appears upon its threshold, a strange regal figure, touched with forest mystery, and carrying a bag holding herbs in her hand.*

THE HERB GATHERER.

Now, by the tap of thy fingers I know thee to be an elf. What dost thou here so far from the heart of the forest? Where are the other elves, thy comrades?

HEATHER BELL

(overjoyed).

Thou dost *see* me? Thou dost *hear* me?

THE HERB GATHERER.

Assuredly.

HEATHER BELL.

Then why do *they* not see me?

THE HERB GATHERER.

They?

HEATHER BELL.

The village children who passed but now with songs and dances. I call to them and they will not listen, I stretch out my arms to them and they will not heed me. Why do they pass with never a glance or a word for me?

THE HERB GATHERER

(going to seat, left).

They pass thee, elf, because they do not see thee. They are mortal folk, and to them thou art only a shadow.

HEATHER BELL

(to herself, following Herb Gatherer to seat).

A shadow! Mayhap, then, that is why! *(To the Herb Gatherer.)* O good Herb Gatherer, they say in the village that forest ways have made thee more than human wise and for that reason I seek thy counsel. Listen. All my life I was content in the forest. The wind and the dew and the stars were enough for me. Then came the night when I strayed to the edge of the village, and saw the lights that shone through windows and doorways, welcome lights, human lights, the lights of Home! And since that time the lights of fairyland have never called me; I have no heart for any elfin dances; I shiver now when winds sweep through the forest. I want the look of human eyes,

so deep, so tender. I want the touch of human children's hands.

THE HERB GATHERER

(nodding to herself).

Weary of unreality, poor elf. Aye, there be many like thee.

HEATHER BELL.

There is a house in the village—a little house where a man and his wife sit childless by their hearthstone, and on winter nights when the wind wails the woman raises her head and listens. And ofttimes she opens the door and looks without.

"Why dost thou open the door, wife?" says the man.

"Lest a wandering beggar child touch the latch, and I not hear it," says the woman. "For though we are poor there is bread enough for one mouth more, and a place is ever to spare at our hearthstone."

"And in thy heart too, good wife," says the man.

"Aye, and in my heart, too," says the woman.

Seest thou not, good Herb Gatherer, that if they could but hear me I might lift the latch and enter. Often and often I knock, and often I stand with my face pressed to the window. Is it because I am a shadow that they do not hear me?

THE HERB GATHERER.

Aye, 'tis because thou art a shadow, as all elves are shadows.

HEATHER BELL

(anxiously).

Is it my wings that make me not a human?

THE HERB GATHERER.

Nay, 'tis because thou hast no soul.

HEATHER BELL

(passionately).

No soul! What is a soul? Can I not gain one? Answer!

THE HERB GATHERER.

Aye, thou canst gain one. But how I may not tell thee.

HEATHER BELL

(joyously).

Oh, I will find the way, if way there be! Let me but think upon it! Wilt thou wait here for me?

THE HERB GATHERER.

Aye, I will wait. What is thy name, strange elf?

HEATHER BELL.

My name is Heather Bell.

THE HERB GATHERER.

And thou are rightly called; for thou are garbed like the dim moors at twilight.

HEATHER BELL

(bounding off left).

I will not keep thee long, I promise thee.

THE HERB GATHERER

(going from flower to flower, culling and cutting and chanting slowly as she bends over them).

Herb that only knows the moon,
Flower that ever fades too soon;
Bud the honey bee hath left,
Stem the summer storm hath cleft—
Of ye all I take my till,
Be ye balm for human ill!

HEATHER BELL

(re-entering joyfully from left, hands full of glittering metal).

Look, look, good Herb Gatherer! Now I shall have me a soul; for see, I bring more gold than a king's ransom! 'Tis elfin gold, all glittering and shining.

THE HERB GATHERER

(shaking her head).

Thou canst not *buy* a soul, sweet Heather Bell. Gold cannot gain thee one.

HEATHER BELL

(letting the gold slip through her fingers to the ground).

Alack for my hopes! Yet still there is some way! *(Anxiously.)* Thou wilt be here when I return to thee?

THE HERB GATHERER.

Aye, I'll be here.

HEATHER BELL

(with returning lightness).

I'll speed me!

[*Exit Heather Bell, left.*

THE HERB GATHERER

(chanting and bending as before).

Pollen bright as drifting gold,
Honey that the flower bells hold,
Subtle juices every one
Slow fermented by the sun,
Working nature's wondrous will,
Be ye balm for human ill.

[*Re-enter Heather Bell, right.*

Art back again, sweet Heather Bell?

HEATHER BELL.

Swift as my wings could carry me! And now at last, good Herb Gatherer, I have my portent. Wise as thou art, there are some things we elves alone are given to know. I can tell the language of the bees and birds, what the brook sings as it runs, and what old runes and tales the pine trees whisper one to another—all this will I fathom for thee and more, so I may gain me a soul!

THE HERB GATHERER

(pityingly).

Knowledge cannot give thee a soul, sweet Heather Bell. All the deep lore of Elfdom will not aid thee.

HEATHER BELL.

Nay, I will try again. Wait yet a little, good Herb Gatherer.

[*Exit Heather Bell, left.*

THE HERB GATHERER

(bending and chanting as before).

Branch that frost can never blight,
Creeping tendril, curled and white,
Fibers sunshine hath not found,
Root that groweth underground,
Now your healing tasks fulfil,
Be ye balm for human ill!

[*Re-enter Heather Bell, breathless, from background.*

How now, Elf? What has possessed thee?

HEATHER BELL

(passionately, her face wet with tears).

Oh, come—come swiftly! Here in the wood a child hath gone astray! I cannot make her hear me —cannot make her see me——! The tarns are deep —the water pixies evil! Beseech you——

THE HERB GATHERER

(pausing).

Hark!

[*The First Village Child appears in background, followed by the other village children, right. From the left hastens Second Village Child, a little girl with bramble-torn dress and cap, and her eyes wide with fear.*

FIRST VILLAGE CHILD.

Sweetest comrade, didst thou stray?

SECOND VILLAGE CHILD.

Aye, I turned and lost my way.
Oh, the wood's a fearsome place—
Every gnarled tree seemed a face!
By the deep tarn in the dell
On the rocks I slipped and fell!
And the forest was so still—
And I wept and fled, until——

FIRST VILLAGE CHILD.

Hush thee, sweet, and have no fear!
See! The village lights are near!
Soon again our steps shall turn
To the hearts where fagots burn!

[*The children pass slowly out left. Heather Bell clings to the Herb Gatherer in a passion of relief.*

THE ELF CHILD.

She is safe—she is safe, oh, good Herb Gatherer! *(Shuddering.)* And the tarn was so deep—and I could not make her hear!

THE HERB GATHERER.

What is that within thine eyes, sweet Heather Bell?

HEATHER BELL

(brushing hand across eyes).

Indeed, good Herb Gatherer, I know not! 'Tis a smarting drop of salty water that seems to come from my heart! 'Tis something I have never felt before—I, who am but a shadow! And alas! alas! good Herb Gatherer, I know at last that the way an elf may gain a soul is a way that I may not find. *(Bitterly.)* I have nought to offer you but shadows, and the dreams of shadows! *(Turns to go.)*

THE HERB GATHERER.

Shadow no longer, little Heather Bell. Thy tears have made thee human. Gold could not purchase thee a soul, nor knowledge gain it for thee, but grief and thought for another than thyself will open e'en the doors of Paradise! *(Heather Bell raises a face radiant with human happiness; her wings fall to the ground.)* Listen! Yonder are the village children! Thy hearthstone waits thee, and a woman's hungry kisses!

CHORUS OF VILLAGE CHILDREN

(re-entering, see Heather Bell and surround her rapturously as a new playmate).

Little stranger, come away!
Thou wilt not refuse to stay?
On our hearths the fagots burn!
Back from forest ways we turn.
O the touch of waiting lips!
O the arm that round us slips!
We shall shut the darkness out,
And the shadows round about.
Twilight falls, yet from afar,
In each doorway like a star,
Shine the beacon lights of home,
Telling us no more to roam!

[*The children dance off right, with the willing Heather Bell. The Herb Gatherer watches them, a grave smile in her eyes. Then she stoops and picks up the wings that a moment since fell from Heather Bell's shoulders. As Heather Bell exits it is seen that she is no longer fantastic in her gestures, nor elfish in her flitting walk as formerly.*

THE HERB GATHERER.

She hath dropped her wings, and doth not even know it! I will take them to mend the storm-broken wings of bees and butterflys!

[*The Herb Gatherer goes towards her hut.*

From the distance comes the joyous echo of children's voices.

Like a welcome when we roam
Shine the beacon lights of home!

[*The Herb Gatherer listens a moment, with face up-raised, and then as the echo dies, enters her hut and closes the door. The play ends.*

COSTUMES

THE HERB GATHERER: Olive green dress, laced bodice, and skirt falling to ankles. Tattered cloak of same color about shoulders. Apron with quaintly embroidered pockets and border. Dark green pouch pocket at girdle which she fills with herbs.

HEATHER BELL: Elfin dress of dark heather purple-brown. Hose and tight-fitting waist of same color. Slashings of purple cloth that fall in ribbons below the knees. Soft pointed elfin shoes. Heather colored wings with faint markings of white. Peaked cap.

VILLAGE CHILDREN: Peasant dresses, quaint and gay.

THE PRINCESS AND THE PIXIES

CHARACTERS

THULDO, a peasant
GRETTA, his wife
ROSADEW, a little apprentice who lives with them and tends their sheep
FLITTERMOUSE, FERNSEED, THISTLEKIN, } Pixies
KING RADNOR
QUEEN ELEANOR
Attendants on the King and Queen

DRAMATIC DIRECTIONS

THE play can be given most easily, for the indoor setting is simple in the extreme: a plain deal table and a deal chair; a cupboard and fireplace built of boxes as described in Nimble-Wit and Fingerkin; and the most ordinary white china bowls, cups, and plates. If the costumes designated for a fuller dramatic production of the play are not wished, then substitute tissue paper caps of brown for the Pixies, all made alike; a bright handkerchief around the neck for Thuldo; an apron with a gay border basted to it for Gretta; and a few rags and tatters basted to Rosadew's every-day dress to give her the appearance of poverty. Capes for the King and Queen, and gilt crowns. Gilt paper stars and crosses fastened to ribbons, and then crosses about the shoulders of their attendants. The one item of expense will be Rosadew's robe that the Pixies have spun for her. This can be made of three yards of pale blue glazed cambric with a great star of silver paper cut out and pasted to the center of the material; and a border of gold paper pasted around the edge.

The gestures of the peasants and their bearing

should be somewhat awkward and uncouth, so as to contrast with that of the court folk. Rosadew's ways and manner should be especially charming. The pixies should move about on tip-toe, lightly, fantastically, swiftly.

THE PRINCESS AND THE PIXIES

The scene is Thuldo's house, a bare, meager room, the floor uncarpeted, the walls unadorned.

At the left there is a hearthstone with embers aglow, and with a shelf above it on which are a few rude cooking utensils.

A table in the center of the room made of plain deal. Three or four plain deal chairs.

Against the right wall a cupboard containing earthenware dishes.

In the center background a door. At the left of this a window rudely curtained. A door opening into another room at left. The time is evening in late April. At the rise of the curtain the stage is empty. A whirring sound comes from the room at left and presently stops as the door opens and Flittermouse appears, looking cautiously about, and stepping nimbly and lightly as if in fear of detection. Then Flittermouse returns to the room at left again and above the pleasant whirring sound is heard the voice of Flittermouse singing.

Twirl and turn, twirl and turn,
Thistlekin, Flittermouse, Seed o' Fern!
Wondrous the garment we prepare,
Fit for a true Princess to wear.

Golden the thread on the spindle flies,
Pearly the tears of Rosadew's eyes,
Twirl and turn, twirl and turn,
Thistlekin, Flittermouse, Seed o' Fern!

[*As the song ends Flittermouse comes into the room again, and somewhat impatiently, as well as cautiously, looks out the door.*

FLITTERMOUSE.

There's not a sign of them!

THISTLEKIN

(entering with Fernseed).

Not a sign, say you, Flittermouse, and here we are at your elbow!

FLITTERMOUSE

(turning).

Greetings, fellow Pixies! Where have you been this long time?

FERNSEED.

Out on the hills where Rosadew is tending sheep.

FLITTERMOUSE.

Was she alone, good Fernseed?

FERNSEED.

Nay, not altogether alone; for at noon there came an old woman so feeble and weary that Rosadew must

needs help her over the muddy brook bank, and the lichen-covered rocks.

THISTLEKIN.

And later there came a beggar boy with whom Rosadew must needs share her black bread and goat's cheese. *(Mysteriously.)* So here's to our further spinning, comrades!

FERNSEED.

Aye, and neither Rosadew nor Thuldo nor his wife have ever guessed what goes on beneath their very roof.

FLITTERMOUSE.

Hist! I hear Goodwife Gretta coming! Let us to our spinning!

[*Exit gnomes through door, left.*

GRETTA

(entering and looking about).

There's no one here—'tis as quiet as the fields in the spring sunshine, and yet I thought I heard footsteps. Well, I was mistaken. 'Twas naught but the wind playing tricks in the chimney, and I must set the cakes to brown. *(Bends at hearthstone, setting out round cakes, like small slabs.)* 'Tis near the hour for Rosadew's home-coming. *(Rises and looks towards outer door.)* There she is, driving the sheep before her. Now she is putting them into the byre. *(Enter*

Rosadew.) Well Rosadew, does the evening find you tired and hungry?

ROSADEW

(prettily).

So tired, and so hungry! But let me turn the cakes, Goodwife Gretta. You have been stirring about the house much longer than I.

GRETTA

(yawning).

The day is long when one rises at dawn! Look to the cakes if you will, Rosadew, and see to it that they do not burn. *(Stretches.)* There are times when it seems a hundred years between sunrise and sunset!

ROSADEW

(rising from hearth).

Will you not rest, Goodwife Gretta, and let me take your knitting? I can knit and watch the cakes at the same time. See how the shadows dance where the firelight plays! *(Gretta dozes in her chair, and Rosadew, seeing that she is not altogether at ease, runs and fetches a footstool.)* Nay, of what use am I if I cannot serve you? Am I not your apprentice, and is it not my pleasure to do my office well? *(Goes back to her place by the fire, and knits industriously.)* There! The last stitch is taken and the cakes are done! Now let me see to the table and the cupboard. *(Rises.)*

GRETTA

(opening her eyes).

Nay, then, how did I fall to dozing! *(Goes to the door.)* 'Tis almost supper time! *(Stands by the door looking out.)*

ROSADEW.

Aye, the hills are growing dark, and the sunset is fading!

GRETTA.

I can see Thuldo coming up the hill road now. He is late. What kept you, Thuldo? I have been looking and listening for you these many moments!

THULDO

(entering).

Great news is astir on the highway! The King and Queen are weary of living alone in their great castle, and have sent forth word that the child that is nearest to being a Princess they will take and rear as their own!

[*Rosadew during the following has put the cakes on a platter, and now goes to and fro between the cupboard and the table, putting rude bowls and plates on it.*

GRETTA.

Nearest to being a Princess? What can that mean, I wonder?

THULDO.

Whatever it means, wife, it is no affair of ours. Our lives pass far enough from courts and the like. Come, the table is ready and the cakes have a savory odor. The King and Queen may have finer viands; but I'll warrant they have no finer hunger!

[*They take their places at the table, Rosadew placing the cakes on a platter, and pouring out milk into bowls, rising from her place to wait on Thuldo and Gretta. The humming at the room left begins again, faint as a whisper at first, and then growing gradually louder.*

ROSADEW.

Have you ever seen the King and Queen?

THULDO.

Aye, I have seen them. Often they ride down the highway with smiles and bows for all who pass.

GRETTA

(raising her head).

What is that sound?

THULDO.

Sound?

GRETTA.

It is like the whir of a wheel or a shuttle, as if some one was spinning.

ROSADEW.

Spinning?

GRETTA.

Aye, 'tis like the running of a loom.

THULDO.

What nonsense, wife. You'll be hearing songs in the wind next.

ROSADEW.

Perhaps . . . perhaps it's Pixies!

THULDO

(with a snort of indignation).

Pixies!

ROSADEW.

The little elf-creatures who live upon the moors, and sometimes near the hearths of people's homes.

[*A knock sounds at the door without.*

GRETTA.

Hark! What is that?

THULDO

(placidly going on with his eating).

It is the spring wind blowing at the latch.

GRETTA.

It is a knock. Go open it, Rosadew!

[*King Radnor enters, followed by Queen Eleanor and attendants.*

THULDO

(much taken aback).

It is their Gracious Majesties!

KING RADNOR.

Greetings unto all beneath this roof.

[*Rosadew, with hands clasped upon her breast and wide-open eyes, backs towards the fireplace.*

QUEEN ELEANOR

(to Thuldo and his wife).

Have you not heard of that for which we seek?

THULDO

(bowing lower and lower).

I did, indeed, hear a rumor, your Majesty.

QUEEN ELEANOR.

Is there no child beneath your roof, good peasant?

GRETTA

(recovering from her stupefaction).

But one, your Majesty; a young orphan apprentice

who tends our sheep. But, indeed, if your Majesty wishes a child that is nearest to being a Princess, your Majesty would never look at little Rosadew.

QUEEN ELEANOR.

Yet I have promised myself that I will pass no house, rich or poor; so call the child, good peasant.

GRETTA

(beckoning violently).

Come hither, Rosadew.

ROSADEW

(approaching very timidly).

In such poor rags as these I am not fit to come near your Majesty.

QUEEN ELEANOR

(very charmingly).

Ah, but what if you should prove to be a Princess?

ROSADEW

(wonderingly).

A Princess——!

QUEEN ELEANOR.

I am looking for a little maid who is royal enough to come and live with me in my castle, and how am I to know if she is royal? your big eyes ask. Well, there is one way by which we may always tell; for it isn't

what is worn on the back that makes a Princess, it's what is worn in the heart. And so every little girl who is generous and simple and kind is a very royal sort of Princess, don't you see?

GRETTA

(aside).

Who ever heard the like!

QUEEN ELEANOR

(holding out her hand to Rosadew).

Come and let me look deep into your eyes, little Rosadew.

[As Rosadew goes towards her the door at left opens, and above the whirring is heard the Pixies' song, sung in chorus, rapidly.

Twirl and turn, twirl and turn,
Thistlekin, Flittermouse, Seed o' Fern.
Wondrous the garment we prepare,
Fit for a true Princess to wear.
Golden the thread on the spindle-flies,
Pearly the tears of Rosadew's eyes.
Twirl and turn, twirl and turn,
Thistlekin, Flittermouse, Seed o' Fern.

KING RADNOR

(starting).

'Tis like the sound of Pixie voices.

THISTLEKIN

(dancing in with Flittermouse and Fernseed, who carry between them a gorgeous robe, a tiny diadem of stars, and a necklace of pearls).

Aye, and we are none but Pixies, your Majesty. And all day long and every day we watch little Rosadew yonder as she tends her sheep on the hills. And there is none too lowly for her to help, and none so poor but that she must do them a courtesy. For everything that is glad she has a smile; and for everything that is sorrowful, a tear. So all unknown to Thuldo and his wife beneath this roof we have done our Pixie spinning, and now our handiwork is finished. 'Tis a robe for Rosadew, woven of her deeds of kindness, and bordered with an embroidery of the sweetest thoughts. *(Places it about Rosadew's shoulders.)* You need no longer blush for your rags, sweet Rosadew.

FERNSEED.

And here is a necklace made of all the tears of pity she has shed. *(Fastens it about her neck.)*

FLITTERMOUSE.

And these stars are made of the love and shiningness that looks forth from her eyes. *(Crowns her with diadem of tiny stars.)*

QUEEN ELEANOR

(tenderly).

Ah, I see now that she is a true Princess. Will

you come with me, little Rosadew, and live in the castle of my heart?

ROSADEW.

O, gladly, gladly; for none ever looked at me as you have looked, none ever spoke in such a gentle voice as yours *(Queen Eleanor clasps her to her.)* But Thuldo and his wife, with whom I have lived so long, and my sheep whom I have tended——

QUEEN ELEANOR.

You shall see them often, Rosadew, and this I promise you: that neither hunger nor cold shall ever cross their threshold.

ROSADEW.

And the Pixies—dear little people of the moor, how can I ever thank you?

FLITTERMOUSE.

By remembering that we are always in your service.

[Exit King Radnor, Queen Eleanor, Rosadew and attendants.

THISTLEKIN.

Come, comrades. Our labors are finished. Let us go dance in the moonlight!

[Exit Pixies through door in background.

THULDO

(dazedly, standing by Rosadew's place at table and touching the things she used).

There is the plate from which she ate, and the cup from which she drank! She, a Princess! 'Tis a sign, wife, that we must be careful of what we say and do, for who knows how many of the folk we meet may be royal?

CURTAIN

COSTUMES

ROSADEW: Tattered dress of black or brown. Little sleeves coming to the elbow. White stockings to represent bare feet.

THULDO: Peasant costume. Black, shabby knee breeches. White, loose shirt, over which is worn a dark green vest with tarnished brass buttons down one side.

GRETTA: Scarlet skirt. Black peasant bodice. White chemisette.

KING RADNOR: Velvet cap with gold and plume. Long purple velvet riding cloak that covers him from head to heel.

QUEEN ELEANOR: Long black velvet riding cloak opening over a robe of rich brocade.

The King and Queen's attendants. As handsome court clothes as possible.

THE CHRISTMAS GUEST

A Miracle Play in One Act after the Manner of the Sixteenth Century

CHARACTERS

ROSAMUND
GEOFFREY
HAROLD
ELINOR
FRANCES
DAME MARGARET
A BEGGAR
THE SPIRIT OF YULE. Prologue and Epilogue

DRAMATIC DIRECTIONS

In order to give a sixteenth century appearance to the schoolroom production, at each end of the space which forms the stage, and part way across, place screens. Over the screens hang portièrs or curtains of some solid color—dark green, crimson, Italian blue. These screens are so placed as to give the necessary number of exits and entrances, viz., the door in center background, and one at right and left. Against the background or wall, hang a curtain of some material closely resembling flowered damask. This, when lifted with an air of looking out, will stand in lieu of a window. White splotches of chalk on the blackboard over whch this curtain is hung will give the effect of a snowy night outside when the curtain is lifted. If " mission furniture " is not procurable, drape the school chairs with curtains to give a sixteenth century effect. The fireplace mentioned in the directions can be done without; though if one of the school-made fireplaces fashioned of drygoods boxes mentioned in the other plays can be had, it will add greatly to the scene. On the curtains which drape the screens, and against any of the wall space that remains, hang as many pine and holly wreaths as possible. Have candles burning here and there to show it is the close

of day. If the more ornate costumes described at the end of the play are not procurable, the everyday dresses of the children can be changed thus: White cheesecloth draperies for the Spirit of Yule, chaplet of real or artificial holly. The quaint dresses for the girls should be made in the same fashion as those described in The House of the Heart, there being little change in the costumes of children in the two centuries. The boys' costumes are also the same as those described in The House of the Heart. The material, cambric. For Elinor, pale blue. For Frances, pale yellow. For Dame Margaret, an everyday long dress with a white cap and kerchief. For Geoffrey, dark purple. For Harold, dark green. For the beggar, a long tattered hood and cloak of some dark color, gray or brown.

If the play is given on a miniature stage, care should be taken about the lighting of the scene. From the time when the children blow out the candles the room should grow darker and darker. Then, when Frances discovers that the beggar was indeed the angel, a brilliant shaft of light should strike full into the darkened room.

The Spirit of Yule stands before the curtain and delivers the Prologue

LORDINGS and Ladies gathered here
To have your fill of Christmas cheer,
Give ear I pray you heedfully
Unto such things as here shall be.
Short is our play and scant of wit,
Yet I beseech you, follow it
And take the kernel of its truth.
As for the players—let their youth
Condone their faults. Your patience lend
And if ye find aught to commend
In this our play, we are repaid
For all the striving we have made.
Now shall the curtain slowly rise,
Displaying to our waiting eyes
The play's beginning. Let it be
Heard to the end with courtesy.

THE CHRISTMAS GUEST

The scene of the play is the hall of a sixteenth century house of people of quality. At the right a chimney place with huge logs aglow. The chimney shelf is banked with Christmas greens. By the hearth, facing the audience, a splendidly carved high-backed chair. Near it a footstool. There are a number of candles burning on the chimney shelf.

In the right background a door opening on the vista of a white wintry twilight that is nearing its close.

In the left background a window with crimson damask curtains reaching to the floor.

At the left, back, a door opening into another room of the house. On the left wall, skins, swords, deer horns, etc. Running along the lower part of the wall a long carved bench. On it tumbled heaps of Christmas gifts, bunches of holly and mistletoe, etc.

At the rise of the curtain Dame Margaret is seated by the fire embroidering. She is small and ruddy. Her hair is almost white, but her face is unlined.

Near the center of the room there is a table (mission style). On it a plate, cup, and flagon, Christmas cakes, and candles burning. At the left the children stand in a group, holding their presents in their hands, notably, a fur-lined hood, a pouch purse, fur-lined

shoes, while Rosamund is trying on a brocaded fur-lined cloak that falls in heavy folds to the floor, calling on the others to admire it.

ROSAMUND.

Doth it not look most fairly, Frances?

FRANCES.

Nay,
I'm weary of thy cloak. Put it away.
Ever since morn we've talked of naught but gifts,
Now while the north wind drives the snow in drifts
It is the hour for tales and legends old,
For rhymes of saints, or of crusaders bold,
Of kings and heroes and angelic choir.
Come, let us gather close about the fire,
And quench the candles, till we make the room
A place of dancing shadows—gleam and gloom.

[*Rosamund and Geoffrey blow out candles.*

Draw fast the curtains. Let the Yule log's light
Be our one festal flame this Christmas night!

(to Harold)

What dost thou see?

HAROLD

(who has gone to draw the curtains, pauses there, looking out).

I see the roadway go
Past frosty hedge and meadow white with snow,

Where nothing stirs, save wintry boughs tossed high
Against the bleakness of the bitter sky.

ROSAMUND

(gaily).

Come, leave the casement. What have we to do
With winter's humors? Here are wreaths of yew
And candlelight and our own hearthstone's glow—
So let the drifts heap high, and the wind blow!

HAROLD.

Nay, for on foot to-night, storm-fagged and bent,
Their bodies hunger-torn, their raiment rent,
Who knows what beggars face the bitter wind!

GEOFFREY.

Now Heaven grant that such may shelter find,
And peace and cheer.

FRANCES.

Unto that wish, Amen!

ROSAMUND

(as children follow her towards where Dame Margaret is sitting).

Come, let us gather near the hearth and then
Perchance we'll ask Dame Margaret for a tale!

DAME MARGARET.

A tale, dear hearts? Hark! How the wind doth wail!

It seems to twist the branches of each tree
And wring from them a cry of agony.

GEOFFREY.

I'll warrant none will stir abroad *this* night.

DAME MARGARET.

Save one, my son, who speeds on wings of light!

GEOFFREY

(amazed).

On wings of light——

DAME MARGARET.

Aye, for the legends say
That ever on the close of Christmas day,
When folk are tired of feasting and of mirth,
The Christmas Angel comes again to earth,
Chooses a house and knocks upon its door——

ELINOR

(wide-eyed).

Why, thou hast never told *this* tale before!

DAME MARGARET.

And then——

A WOMAN'S VOICE

(calling from beyond the door at left).

Good Dame!

DAME MARGARET

(rising).

It is thy mother's call.

(raises voice)

Coming, my lady!

[*Exits hurriedly, left.*

ROSAMUND

(still gazing dreamily into fire).

What if to this hall
The wondrous, shining Christmas Angel came,
All clothed in white, with wings like to a flame,
Knocked on our door and——

ELINOR.

O, I quake with fear!
Thou dost not think an angel will come *here?*

ROSAMUND

(her arm about her).

Why tremblest thou?

ELINOR

(shamefacedly).

I'd know not what to say
Unto an angel—if one chanced to stay!

FRANCES

(wisely).

Say? Sooth, it is the time of deed, not word.
It is the birthday of our gracious Lord,
So to the angel we would give our best,
The gifts we cherish above all the rest.

[*They go to the bench, left, taking up the gifts as they speak.*

ROSAMUND.

Then I would give my cloak of glorious hues.

ELINOR.

And I my hood!

HAROLD.

And I my fur-lined shoes!

GEOFFREY.

And I my purse!

FRANCES.

And I——

[*A knock on the door without.*

HAROLD

(in an awed voice).

Some one is there!
Open the door!

ROSAMUND.

Nay, nay, I do not dare!

ELINOR

(fearfully).

If it should be the Angel!

ROSAMUND

(commandingly).

Open, straight!
Ye know full well an angel should not wait.

ELINOR.

Hark! How the wind wails! And the fire burns low.
I am afraid.

FRANCES.

Stay, thou, and I will go.

[*The children stand together, silent and half fearful, while Frances crosses to the door and opens it. On the threshold appears an old Beggar, tattered and forlorn, yet in spite of flapping rags wearing a strangely regal aspect.*

THE BEGGAR

(extending palm).

Hast thou any alms to give on Christmas night?

GEOFFREY

(aside to the others, intensely relieved).

Nay, 'tis no angel clothed in robes of light,
'Tis but a wandering Beggar, lean and old.

FRANCES

(to beggar).

Come in and rest thee. It is bitter cold.

[*Beggar crosses with her to chair by fire.*

And here be Christmas cakes, so eat and sup,

[*Takes them from table, center.*

And have thy fill.

[*Hands flagon.*

THE BEGGAR.

Sweet to the lips the cup
So freely given, for it warms the heart,
And to the soul true joyance doth impart.

ROSAMUND

(aside to Geoffrey).

That speech is passing strange. What means it?

GEOFFREY

(shaking his head, much mystified).

Nay,
I do not know!

ELINOR

(timidly, to beggar).

Hast thou come far to-day?

THE BEGGAR.

Aye, far! From a Far Country!

FRANCES.

Wilt thou not
Let me refill thy cup?

[*She and the Beggar talk in dumb show. The other children withdraw to the left and talk among themselves, with ever-straying glances towards the figure by the fire.*

ROSAMUND

(aside, soberly).

Bethink the lot
Of beggar folk! While we are housed and warm
They fare forth cold and hungry through the storm.
The chill wind makes a mock of what they wear,
Their poor bones feel the keen and searching air;
Knuckles all blue with frost, and feet half-shod,
Pierced by the stones and brambles they have trod.

HAROLD.

While we have joys and comforts manifold
Are we not churls our bounty to withhold?

GEOFFREY.

Come, then, and let us give the while we may.

[*They cross to Beggar, carrying gifts.*

GEOFFREY

(fastening shoes on Beggar's feet).

Wilt thou not take from me on Christmas day
A little gift to smooth the roads ye tread?

HAROLD

(bestowing purse).

And this, perchance, will find for you a bed,
The highways are full dark and cold I know,
For those who journey friendless through the snow.

FRANCES.

In sooth, why should you trudge the road again?
To share our peace and shelter we are fain.
Will you not linger while the Yule logs burn?

THE BEGGAR.

Nay! To that country far I must return!

ELINOR

(shyly).

Well, then, I prithee wear this hood for me!

THE BEGGAR

(rising).

Now in the name of sweet Sainte Charitie
I give ye thanks!

ROSAMUND

(approaching).

And pleasure me to wear
This cloak to shield ye from the wintry air.

THE BEGGAR.

It is a finer cloak than beggars use.

ROSAMUND

(eagerly).

But thou wilt not a Christmas gift refuse?
Wilt thou not take the gift as friend to friend?

[*The Beggar looks at Rosamund a long moment and then bows head in assent. She slips the cloak about the Beggar's shoulders.*

THE BEGGAR.

Who giveth to the poor doth surely lend!

[*Pauses at door, facing audience.*

In time to come may there be shown to ye
Such welcome as ye now have shown to me,

And when ye knock the door be opened wide.

[*Raises hand.*

Till then all Christmas peace and joy abide
Amongst ye always.

[*Exit Beggar.*

FRANCES

(in a hushed voice).

As the Beggar spoke
'Twas like a benediction, and the cloak
Fell as in royal folds.

GEOFFREY.

Oh, hast thou thought
That if the Angel comes we now have nought
To give in greeting?

[*A sudden white radiance streams in from without, filling the darkened room.*

FRANCES

(at window, with a cry).

Look! There where but now
The Beggar stood stands one about whose brow
Flashes a glory mystical and white.
Oh, 'twas no Beggar came to us to-night!

ROSAMUND.

It was the Angel! And we did not know!

FRANCES.

Grieve not. It was a miracle. For lo,
Humble and piteous and meanly dressed
The Christmas Angel came to be our guest!

CURTAIN

EPILOGUE

Spoken by the Spirit of Yule

LORDINGS and Ladies, all is done,
And our short play its length has run.
For that ye heard it patiently
We give most humble thanks to ye,
And bid ye think of this glad time
Of wassail bowl and church bell's chime
That there be those who lack for bread,
Who have not where to lay their head.
Forget not when your hearthstones glow
Those other hearths whose fires are low,
That giving where the needy are
Ye give to something higher far.
And now good-night. If, of your grace
Our play hath pleased you for a space
Right glad are we, and well content,
And count our labors blithely spent,
And wish to ye what ere befall
A Merrie Christmas, one and all!

COSTUMES

THE SPIRIT OF YULE: Long white cashmere robe, falling in straight folds from neck, edged with white swansdown, and bands of green ribbon. White sandals laced with green. Angel sleeves falling back softly from arms. Has flowing hair and a chaplet of holly on head. Carries a tall white staff in hand.

ROSAMUND: Quaint dress of rose colored velvet, cut from a square neck and falling in folds to the floor. Angel sleeves. White lace edging neck. Cap of white lace on head.

ELINOR: Pale blue cloth made in same fashion as Rosamund's.

FRANCES: White brocade. Edging of brown fur and gold. Made in same quaint fashion as other two.

GEOFFREY: Trunk hose and suit of dark purple—the tunic cut plain. Leather girdle and pouch at waist.

HAROLD: Suit same style. Dark green.

DAME MARGARET: Gray dress of woolen cloth. Crossed white kerchief. Fifteenth Century cap. The shoes are all in the soft pointed style of "Romeo" slippers.

THE BEGGAR: Dark brown ragged robe and cloak, and a head-covering something like a monk's cowl in that it should shadow the face. White stockings to simulate bare feet, with coarse leather sandals much torn and worn, and fastened with thongs.

The parts are for children from ten to fourteen. Dame Margaret should be played by a mature-looking child, the Beggar by some one who overtops the other children in height, and Harold and little Elinor by the youngest children in the cast.

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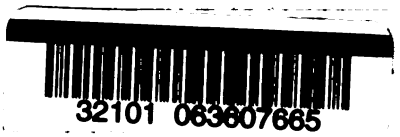
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